BY THE WAY
BALLADS

W. SAPTE, JR.

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BEING SOME TRIVIAL TALES IN
VARIED VERSE

BY

W. SAPTE, JR.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS BY
JOHN HASSALL AND FRANK REYNOLDS

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To
M. C. S.

The Author begs to express his thanks to the various Editors who have kindly permitted the reproduction of such of the following verses as have already appeared in print.

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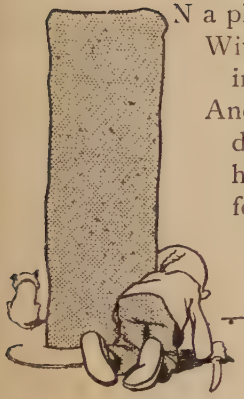
BY THE WAY BALLADS

The Chinese Cook

The Story of a Suburban Tragedy



IN a pleasant bijou villa Mr Pipson did reside
With Amelia Miranda, his extremely charming bride,
And her little pet dog Fido, whom his mistress ne'er forsook,
And the usual two domestics, one a housemaid, one a cook (?).

And the usual domestics in the usual way went on;
They would gossip with the tradesmen and their novelettes they'd con;
But they wouldn't keep things tidy, and they wouldn't keep things clean,
And they weren't such early risers as domestics should have been.

With costly regularity the china ware they smashed,
And when reprimanded mildly they weren't in the least abashed,
But vowed they'd not be "put upon in any such a way,"
And gave their mistress notice that "they weren't a-goin' to stay."

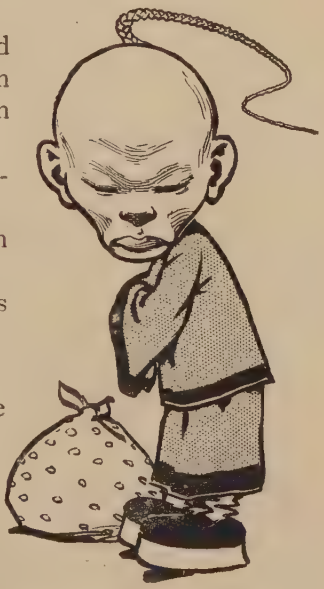
In extremely quick succession these domestics came and went,
Not one "give satisfaction," not one was e'er content,
Though Mrs Pipson did the bulk of what there was to do,
And Mr P. ne'er scolded—though he'd oft occasion to.

Things were in this sad condition, Mrs Pipson wan and worn,
And her husband sometimes wishing that he never had been born,
When a City friend who happened to be similarly "blest,"
Chanced to mention a new system he himself proposed to test.

"I'm going to hire a Chinaman," this City person said.
"I am told they're simply perfect as domestics—make your bed,

Cook your dinner like an angel, do your
washing, scrub and sweep,
And cost you next to nothing in the matter
of their keep."

To abbreviate our story, 'tis sufficient here
to say
That when next the P.'s domestics "gave
them notice," one fine day,
They accepted the announcement with
great equanimitee,
And asked their City friend to find them,
too, a Cheap Chinee.



Well, he did, and
very shortly Wun
Long Li position
took
In the little bijou villa as both parlour-
maid and cook,
And Pipson breathed more freely than
he'd done for quite a while,
And his wife surprised her neighbours
by appearing with a smile.

For Wun Long Li broke nothing; he
was quiet, he was quick;
Of everything domestic he appeared
to know the trick;
His cooking was a marvel, and his
manners really nice,
And he studied Pipson's pocket by consuming nought but
rice.

Mrs P. was so delighted that she thought she'd celebrate
Her complete emancipation from her former harassed state,
So her principal acquaintance she determined to invite
To a dinner to be given on a—memorable—night.

"We can pin our faith to Wun Long Li," she pleasantly observed;
"He shall show our doubting Thomases how dinners *should* be served;
And I've thought it would be pleasant—you'll excuse my little whim—
If a Chinese dish he gave us; which, of course, we'd leave to him."

Her husband acquiescing, out the invitations went,
And Wun Long Li expressed himself as very well content;
A little extra labour was a thing he didn't mind
For a master and a mistress who were so extremely kind.

When the Chinese dish was mentioned a smile went round his face,
As if the notion flattered him—'twas probably the case—
"My b'long Impelial cookee," he observed with honest pride.
"Me makee splendid dishee; do you velly good inside."

Well, the evening of the party came in ordinary course,
And the chosen of the Pipsons assembled in full force;
They were full of curiosity, with perhaps a tinge of doubt,
And one or two felt anxious, though resolved to brave it out.

Mrs P. had made the table look exceptionally gay,
And the soup proved quite delicious, though a simple *consommé*.

Then the fish was quite *à l'Anglais*, but 'twas excellently boiled,
And the sauce proved something better than the usual lobster spoiled.

These, however, were but trifles, and the well-roast capon, too,
Though a deed of sterling merit was what other cooks might do;
'Twas the item that succeeded on that generous bill of fare
That the interest excited of all assembled there.

'Twas Wun Long Li's own "special," a dish, as one might say,
That wafted o'er the tablecloth the scent of far Cathay;
'Twas a marvellous concoction in a dazzling frame of rice,
And its odour and appearance both alike proclaimed it nice.

Nice, quotha! Far too mild a term to use was this, I ween;
It was luscious; it was lovely; it was fit for king or queen;
Wun Long Li was complimented by his mistress on the spot,
While congratulations told her what a treasure she had got.

Ancient wisdom oft has taught us, as no doubt you may recall,
That our life is full of changes, and that pride is apt to fall;
And now, alas! with sorrow, 'tis my burden to explain
How the Pipsons' triumph ended, how their joy was turned to pain.

Ere the relics of the *chef d'œuvre* from the board had been removed,
Mrs Pipson thought of someone whom she'd ever dearly loved,
And she asked her pig-tailed servitor, in kindliest of tones—
"Would you please keep darling Fido some of these delicious bones?"

I have often read in fiction of bolts coming from the blue,
And the simile at present must—inadequately—do ;
Wun Long Li stared at his mistress, then he made this answer grim :
"Lilly dog no more b'long livvee—justee now you *eatee him !*"

The scene that followed baffles, I must candidly confess,
Any powers of description *I* may happen to possess :
Desperation and hysterics, tears and babel all combined
To make up a situation of the most appalling kind.

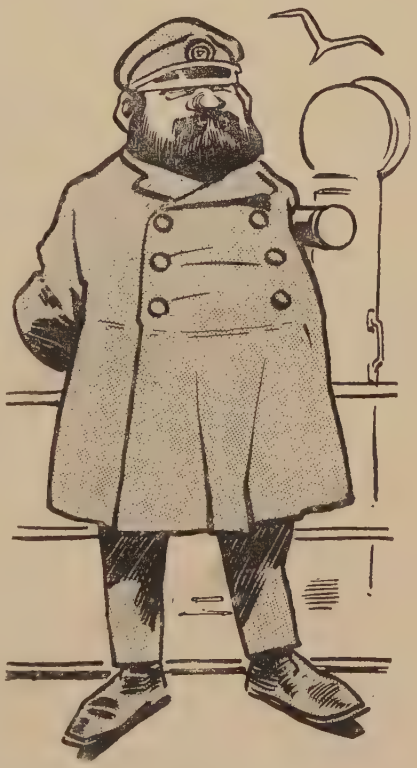
And amid the hurly-burly, quite unmoved by sounds of woe,
Of disgust and indignation, Wun Long Li stood bowing low ;—
"You askee me make dishee," said this wretch with face of wood ;
"So me cookee lilly Fido, and you say him welly good."

This, of course, was the finale of the Chinaman's *régime*,
Mrs P. could ne'er behold him *sans* a strong desire to scream ;
So the usual domestics have resumed their former sway,
And the Pipsons once more suffer in the ordinary way !

The Loss of the Emerald; or, The Widow Macnap

THE good ship *Emerald*,
Captain White,
Put forth to sea one Saturday night,
With an excellent crew, in the best of order,
And a goodly number of passengers aboard her.

Of ladies alone there were half-a-score,
Whom the captain gladly welcomed (for
A seafaring man, whatever his grade is,
Is usually most polite to the ladies).



Among them was a Widow Macnap,
Who was noticeable for a peculiar cap;
And as nothing would induce her to appear without it,
She was probably bald, one can hardly doubt it.

This cap was by no means commonplace,
Being made of violet satin and lace;
And Captain White, with innate politeness,
Paid a special tribute to its tasty brightness.

For some little time, without mishap,
To ship or crew, or the Widow Macnap,
(To whom the captain showed great devotion),
The *Emerald* ploughed her way through the ocean.

But on Wednesday night, with a frightful shock,
She ran up against a sunken rock,
And ere Captain White could express his annoyance, he
Perceived that his vessel was losing her buoyancy.

The passengers screamed, as they always do,
When the least alarmed, and as for the crew,
With great activity the boats they lowered,
Remarking that the accident was most untoward.

"You mustn't go aboard 'em!" said Captain White.
"The passengers first—let's do what's right."
He added proudly, "Take pattern by *me*, men,
And do your duty as merchant seamen.

"We're going down, but we can't do less
Than give the ladies time to dress;
So therefore, my lads, with a steady, boys, steady,
All hands to the pumps—until they are ready."

With lips compressed, and in voices low,
The gallant fellows replied, "Yo, ho!"
And pumped away, as the regular phrase is,
In nautical circles, just like blazes.

Within five minutes, or something less,
Arrayed in heterogeneous dress,
The passengers, still in a terrible flutter,
Were ready to embark in the launch and cutter.

All save one. "Where's Mrs Macnap,"
The captain cried, "and her beautiful cap?
Delay at this moment is exasperating,
Run down to her cabin and tell her we're waiting!"

They did so; the widow from inside,
In a voice of calm despair replied,
"Say I've lost my cap, and regret extremely—
To appear without it would be *too* unseemly."

A man of infinite resource,
The captain simply said, "Of course—
From what I know of the lady's toilet,
The loss of that cap would completely spoil it."

"All hands cease pumping and look around
Till Mrs Macnap's lace cap be found;
This delay is certainly most vexatious,
But you'll find it soon if you're pertinacious."

"Aye, aye, sir!" shouted the gallant crew,
"Whatever *can* be done, we'll do."
The passengers all stood simply wrapt in
Admiration of their remarkable captain.

From port to starboard and larboard too,
They searched the vessel through and through;
So careful was their examination,
That nothing escaped their observation.

"There isn't a cap to be seen!" said they.
Brave White replied, "I note what you say;
I'll speak to the lady myself, for I'm thinking,
The *Emerald's* just on the point of sinking."

The gallant officer stepped below,
And tapped at the widow's door. "Pray go!"
She cried; "though my life I dearly cherish,
Before I appear without my cap I'll perish."

"The water is mounting by degrees,"
Said Captain White; "now it's up to my knees.
To oblige me, madam, come out, I implore you;
We'll all of us look the other way, I assure you."

"Since you promise me that, I'll delay no more,"
Said Mrs Macnap, as she opened the door;
But the captain's answer was couched in Latin,
For she actually *was wearing* the missing satin!

With excusable irritation red,
He asked what it was she'd got on her head ;
But while she was ejaculating, " Well, I never ! "
The *Emerald* sank to the bottom for ever !

The Spectre of Moatbury

THE Spectre of Moatbury grinned with glee,
And rubbed his bony hands;
"It is almost too good to be true,"
quoth he,
"That a tenant should come to old
Moatburee,
But so the matter stands;
For they're scraping here, and they're
scratching there,
And they're painting and polishing
everywhere;
Ho, ho! Ho, ho! It *must* be so—
A tenant is coming at last, I know!"

"Ho, ho! Ho, ho! Well, it *has* been
slow
For a hundred and twenty years or
so,
To wander about, above, below,
With never a person
To utter a curse on;
To clank one's chain
All night in vain,
To gibber and howl, when the simple fact is,
It's not worth doing, except for practice.
A ghost less tough than myself, I trow,
Would have died of weariness long ago!"

The Spectre of Moatbury'd guessed aright;
The Grange *was* let to a City knight,
A hard-headed, practical, vulgar wight,
Named Sir Timothy Brown,
Who soon came down
With a marvellous retinue from town—
Two sons and a daughter, and guests galore—
And Moatbury Grange was itself once more!

The Spectre of Moatbury chuckled with glee.
"I'm in for some fun at last," quoth he.
"They shall hear me creak, they shall hear me croak,
I'll begin with the servants—it will be a joke!
Let me see, what's the date?
Why, there's not long to wait
Before I can *show* myself! That's a delight
I think I'll reserve for this fat City Knight!"

I should here digress for a minute, or less,
Just the fact to explain, that, though clanking his chain,
And croaking and gibbering just as he chose,
'Twas but once in a year
That his ghost could *appear*
And exhibit himself in his doublet and hose.
He possessed this power
At the midnight hour
(As is common with spectres like him, I believe)
At the midnight hour on Christmas Eve.

The Spectre of Moatbury grinned with glee
And indulged in many a leer;
"I'll begin with that small page-boy," said he,
"When he goes for the kitchen beer."

And he followed the lad down the cellar that night
And shuffled and rattled with much delight,
And the boy looked round
As he heard the sound,
And peered with his candle along the ground,
But—displayed no sign of fright.
And the spectre felt just a trifle piqued,
And he croaked and gibbered, and hissed and squeaked.
And scratched the cask with a skeleton nail,
Expecting to see the boy turn pale;
But the boy only took a pull at the ale
And said, "To-morrow, when work is done,
I'll fetch old Vixen and have some fun—
For there's rats down here all right!"

Next evening Sarah, a housemaid trim,
The belle of the servants' ball,
Pursued, had she known, by a spectre grim
In a twilight solemn, ghostly, and dim,
Was crossing the ancient hall.

The spectre shuffled along the stones,
Then all of a sudden he rattled his bones
And uttered a loud "He, he!"

'Twas a sort of a giggle, a sort of a wheeze,
A dash of a laugh, and a *soupçon* of sneeze,
With a try at an upper G.

The housemaid tossed a contemptuous head,
But she didn't increase her pace,
And she simply observed, with no sign of dread,
"Well, this *is* a draughty old place!"
And the Spectre of Moatbury groaned aloud—
It really gave him pain,
But the housemaid wasn't the least bit cowed,
So he also groaned in vain.
"This domestic staff
Is too sober by half—
Too matter of fact," growled he;

And he vowed next day to make essay
On the Knight's young familee,
Which he duly did, and he tried his best
On Sir Timothy's youngest son;

But the lad proved just as bad as the rest,
And the Spectre of Moatbury sadly confessed,
That his haunting days were done.
"I've but one single chance," he cried,
"'Twill come on Christmas Eve,
When into Sir Tim's own room I'll glide
And stand, all visible, by his side—
Perhaps they'll *then* believe!"

So till Christmas Eve he sat him down,
And thought things o'er with a permanent frown,
And then at midnight stroke
He strode, surrounded by bluish light,
To the sleeping-room of the portly Knight,
Who very politely woke.
"Dear me!" cried Sir Timothy, rubbing his eyes,
And his tone showed no terror, but rather surprise—
"I knew at the time it wasn't wise:
I shouldn't have eaten those beastly mince pies!"

The Spectre of Moatbury sobbed and shook,
And then very sadly his leave he took—
He was pained more than words can tell.

It was clear his mission on earth was o'er,
'Twas useless to haunt such folk any more ;
They had sounded his ghostly knell.
Slowly and silently up the stair
He wended his weary way ;
He had suffered enough—
And a little blue puff
Of smoke in the morning grey,
As it rose in the air
Was the last, I declare,
That's been seen of him since that day.

The Bandit's Tear

ONCE on a time there dwelt in a wild Sardinian fastness
Carlo Lorenzo Poloni, a wild Sardinian bandit;
Young and handsome and brave, but fierce as the beasts of the forest,
And making a pretty good thing by plundering travelling tourists
Brought to his lair by his friends, the guides of the neighbouring village—
To whom he was wont to allow a trifle by way of commission.

Carlo Poloni's retreat, the wild Sardinian fastness
Commanded a mountain pass, and this he would sweep with his spy-glass
On hearing the signal below, arranged with the guides I have mentioned,
Whenever a traveller started, a not very musical *jödel*—

Deemed by the tourist no more than th' unpleasant effect of the sunshine
On the uncivilised souls of the simple sons of the village.

Carlo would sweep the path, as I've just remarked, with his spy-glass,
Till the traveller hove in sight, and then he would smile or be gloomy
According to what he saw; if it chanced the new-comer was native,
Then with contemptuous shrug he would snap his fingers, would Carlo,
And soliloquise to the effect that the game was scarce worth the candle,
Whereas he would dance with glee if the tourist chanced to be British.

The ransoms he sometimes got in exchange for Anglian captives
Were what he would probably call extremely *fino* and *largo;*
And he also found as a rule that the Briton's private belongings
Were better in style and make than those of local production;
Moreover, an Englishman's flask was apt to be filled with a liquor
He found an agreeable relief from the vineg'ry wine of his country.

One day from the village below, on a beautiful morn in September,
There arose to the vigilant ears of the terrible Carlo Poloni

(With whom things had been rather slack for a time) the familiar signal.
Springing at once to his feet, and grasping his sword and revolvers,

He frizzed out his hair with his hands and made himself look very savage;
And then, in his usual way, he swept the path with his spy-glass.

Soon he beheld drawing nigh, an excessively rickety carriage,
Flanked by a couple of guides, who emitted occasional *jödels*,
Which seemed to be merry indeed to the ears of the listening bandit.
"Two guides and a carriage!" he cried. "An English Lord for a ducat."
And again he spread out his hair, and examined his pistols and sabre,
And hid himself out of sight behind a rocky projection.

Nearer and yet more near the rickety carriage approaches,
Until the corner is reached, behind which Carlo Poloni
Lurks, with his hand on his sword, and a deadly smile on his visage.
Then, with a spring like a deer's, he bounds to the midst of the pathway,
And the guides go down on their knees with an affectation of terror,
Which shows that, if other trades fail, they'd make very capital supers.

"What is the matter?" exclaims a voice in the purest Italian
(As taught at Lavender Hill, as an extra, by competent masters),
And then the bandit perceives he is face to face with a lady;
And then the lady perceives she is face to face with a bandit;
And *he* perceives she is fair, and *she* perceives he is dirty—
And the guides both take to their heels, and close their ears to her screaming.

By dint of pressing her throat with his black but muscular fingers,
Carlo Lorenzo Poloni secured comparative quiet;
And then, compelling replies to somewhat personal questions,
Learnt that the lady had left her dear papa in the village
While she went out with the guides to sketch the beauties of nature,
And that her said papa was not unconnected with commerce.
"Let me go! Oh, *do* let me go!" she implored the implacable bandit,
But Signor Poloni remarked 'twas simply a question of ransom—

"Say, five thousand pounds"—he put it in lire or piastres,
Or francs, or whatever 't may be that Sardinians usually trade in.
"Rather a lot," said the captive, whose name was Amelia Peters,
"Not for a lady like you," responded Carlo politely.

"You certainly never will get it," exclaimed Amelia Peters.
'We'll see," was the brief reply of Carlo Lorenzo Poloni:
And then he proceeded to drag her towards the cave that he dwelt in,

Vowing he'd keep her there till her Pa should forward the ransom ;
But Amelia, knowing she'd not be appraised at so lofty a figure,
Went on her knees once more and appealed to the bandit for mercy.

She adjured him by all that she deemed he would hold most probably sacred,
(Which taxed her Italian severely—I wonder how *he* understood it) ;
She adjured him by several things—his country and even his honour ;
And lastly she prayed for release by the love that he bore to his mother.
Then Carlo Lorenzo Poloni displayed a great deal of emotion,
And uttered the foll'wing remarks in a different sort of a metre :—

" Who deemed it needless to be wed
Unto my father—and who said
When I was born she wished me dead ?
My mother !

" Who, firstly, left me in the mire
Beside the road, and in her ire
Afterwards put me on the fire ?
My mother !

" Who used to whop me night and day,
And ultimately ran away,
Leaving me on the parish—eh ?
My mother !

" To whom is it I owe a debt
I've no intention to forget ?
Whom will I serve out even yet ?
My mother ! "

And then a scalding tear rolled down the cheek of the bandit,
Which he hastily wiped away with a red and yellow bandana ;
While Amelia Peters wept, for she felt for poor Carlo Poloni.
But, after a moment's pause, he turned to Amelia softly,
And said, "You may go if you wish—for though 'twas your sad reminiscence
Made me take on like this, your sympathy, madam, has touched me."

Amelia Peters then, for a moment, stared in amazement,
During which she perceived that, if Carlo Lorenzo was dirty,
He was handsome, and young, and brave—three things which weigh with a lady ;
And so, with hysterical sobs, she flung herself on his bosom,
Saying, to his surprise, that she never, never would leave him,
But stay with him all the time, and supply the place of a mother.

"Send to the village," she said, as Carlo, the bandit, embraced her,
"Break the news to my Pa, who, I know, has other intentions ;
But I am of age, and free," and she playfully added to Carlo,
"I'll be your mother, dear boy, and the first thing I'll do is to wash you."
Thus was the compact sealed : Amelia stayed with the bandit,
And after a time her papa returned to his home and his commerce.

The Pensive Policeman

PETER POUND was a policeman, who paraded on his beat,
Or stood firm on fix'd point duty at the corner of the street;
He was strong and he was gentle, he was brave and he was kind,
But 'twas plain to all who saw him he had something on his mind.

He would stand and gaze in vacancy athwart the passing throng—
E'en the coster with his barrow he forgot to "move along"—
And when th' Inspector passed him he omitted to salute,
Till th' Inspector asked politely, "Where's your manners, lazy brute?"

The nursemaid from the Robinsons would pass him with a pout;
His manner didn't even show he knew that she was out;
The cook at Lady Smithson's spread her lures for him in vain—
Peter's thoughts were far from mutton, and from cooks "professed or plain."

His friends grew very anxious, his superiors looked glum,
Even casual observers thought his manner rather rum;
While the criminal fraternity were very pleased, of course,
And hoped his queer example would be followed in the force.

You wonder very likely what it was absorbed him so?
There were quite a lot of people who were curious to know
Why it was he kept so pensive, so exceedingly *distrait*,
That nothing seemed to rouse him from his thoughts from day to day.

Well, let me just explain then! 'Twas a simple little thing
That had captured this poor constable of whom I sadly sing
And enslaved him so completely that he thought of naught beside,
And went through life as in a dream, asleep, though open-eyed.

In a certain publication which he often used to read,
He had chanced on an announcement that was wonderful indeed:
'Twas a very liberal offer of a thousand pounds in gold,
To the reader who correctly a certain thing foretold.

It seems that every day are born, within our happy land,
A multitude of babies—far too great, I understand,
And the journal simply called upon its readers to decide
The number for a certain date it duly specified.

"So many babes," this paper said, "were born on Tuesday last,
So many on a Tuesday, ta'en at random from the past;
Now calculate how many will send up their little cry,
On the Tuesday we have chosen—'tis the second in July."

Peter Pound cut out the coupons to be sent in with each guess
And then the likely number he proceeded to assess;
So many *then*, so many *now*, how many will there be?
Why it sounds a simple problem to be solved by rule of three!

But circumstances count for much, as Peter Pound well knew,
And something might perhaps occur to make those babes too few;
Or some inconsiderate mothers, caring not one row of pins
For hard-working math'maticians, might e'en baffle them with twins.

No, it wasn't quite so easy as to thoughtless folk it sounds,
But Peter meant to do it and to win that thousand pounds;
So he pondered and he studied and he calculated long,
Till his friends grew very anxious, and believed him going wrong.

But at length when he seemed drifting irretrievably to grief,
A change in his demeanour gave them very great relief;
He ceased to be so pensive, and grew really very brisk,
And, at times, as if delighted, on the pavement he would frisk.

He had done his calculation, as of course you will surmise,
And he felt 'twould be a wonder if he didn't win that prize.
It was really nice to see him, and his brethren of the blue
Were right glad to hear their Peter make reply when spoken to.

He had solved the knotty problem, he had filled his coupons up,
And he smiled with satisfaction o'er his early morning cup,
And grew chatty o'er his dinner and his supper; while at night
Dreams of how he'd spend the money filled his slumbers with delight.

How he rushed to buy the paper when it gave the great result!
And how the big, black figures made his big, brave heart exult!
For the babies had stood by him—how he blessed each little dear!
He'd been right upon *one* coupon, on the others very near.

But see, a look of horror comes in gallant Peter's eyes,
And he gazes at the journal in great anger and surprise—
"William Waters of West Brompton"—surely *that* is not his name,
Yet *he's* given as the winner of the Thousand, all the same!

Peter fumed, and Peter raged, and Peter stamped upon his beat,
And gave vent to exclamations which I care not to repeat;
And when he went off duty, to his little desk he tore,
And seized pen and ink and paper as he ne'er had done before.

Could the whole thing be a swindle, or as Peter termed it, "fake"?
Or had the gen'rous journal made a terrible mistake?
But before he'd wet his pen-point, Peter jumped up with a yell,
As his flashing eye that moment on a little packet fell.

His coupons! He'd not posted them! What mockery! Egad,
'Twas really *far* more than enough to drive a fellow mad!
It did so very truly, poor old Peter lost his wits,
First indulging in a series of pre-liminary fits.

And now in an asylum at a fancy "point" he stands,
Counting babies by the million on the fingers of his hands;
Then he fills up ancient coupons which they give him by the score,
And he posts them in a letter-box they've fixed him up therefor.

Soft-Hearted Bill

YOU'RE right, sir, I ain't much to look at, but I ain't a bad 'un to go,
And I think when you know more about me, as yo'll allow that's so;
You can't much tell by their looks, sir, the wuth of the men you meets,
And there's many a humble hero as humbly walks the streets.

There's many a brave heart beatin' inside a tattered shirt,
And 'taint all as get rewarded 'cordin' to their desert;
Why the soldier gets his medal, and his Wictoria Crorse,
For things as *I'd* do with my eyes shut—if I had the chance, o' course.

And, though I says it as shouldn't, there ain't no other line
As produces as many heroes from day to day as mine;
Though, perhaps, it's better to say, sir, for I like to have things right—
As produces as many heroes, as mine, *from night to night.*

For we mostly works in the night-time, not being afraid of the dark,
Which I think speaks well for our consciences, if I may so remark.
And the risk of wiolent usage! not to mention being shot!
Ah, sir! to be a BURGLAR—I tell you, it takes a lot!

It takes a lot of courage, and it takes a lot of skill ;
And yet there's a many people as always speaks of us ill,
And calls us by 'orrible terms, sir, and showers down remarks,
As they'd shrink to apply to their dawg, sir—a useless bag o' barks !

Folks spend a lot of money and they take a lot of pains
To prevent redistribution of their evil-gotten gains ;
But it's 'gainst the laws of Nature as you householders fight—
And *we* think a law of Nature, sir, is naturally right.

And the law as I refers to, and which you can't gainsay,
Is the instinct of helpin' yourself, sir, whenever you sees your way ;
It's implanted in beasts and insects, a part of the general plan,
And it ain't no use to deny, sir, as it's also found in man.

The wealth as rich men gather, why, from what's it all been made ?
Well, *I* should call it thievin'—though you'd set it down to trade ;
And intrinsically speakin', and takin' a proper line,
The things you trouble to store, sir, is no more yours than mine.

Well, well, sir—we won't argue—no doubt we shouldn't agree
But I'll hurry along to the story as you expects from me.
It's about a bit of a job, sir, in which myself and a pal
Come to grief through bein' too gentle in dealin' with a gal.

It don't do to be soft 'earted, for that you may take my word ;
At least, not in *our* profession—but it's where *I've* always erred ;
And many a pal has said to me, " For all your talent, Bill,
Some of these days your tender 'eart'll pull you down, it will."

The crib as we was a-crackin', the time of which I speaks,
Was a London banker's mansion, in which for some three weeks
A decent young chap, whose mother was hintimate with mine,
Had been engaged as assistant in the calves and powder line.

He made things snug for *us*, sir, unlocking the kitching door
When the rest was all a-roostin', and also, and what's more,
He dosed the dog in the stable with a bit of flavoured meat,
And sent us a plan of the mansion and heverything complete.

There was harticles of "virtue" which Stevy Cox and I,
Being truly fond of hart, sir, was sorry to pass by,
But the thing as most demanded our attention and our tools
Was a hiron safe on the landin', full of cash, and plate and jools.

'Twas locked at night by the banker, but where he kep' the key
Was more than our pal could discover. But Stevy Cox and me
Had opened a safe afore, sir, and knew how the trick was done,
Though hopenin' safes ain't ekal to other kinds of fun.

Well, we dodged the peeler easy and opened the kitching door,
And without our boots, like ghosteses—we walks across the floor;
Then the hall—then up the staircase—and there, sir, sure enough,
We found the safe as mentioned, a-looking precious tough.

We went for the weakest part of it—the back, sir, close to the top,
And we'd got a wedge fixed nicely, when we came to a sudden stop,
For we hears a step, and turnin', we saw upon the stair,
The figure slight of a girl in white, a-comin' towards us fair.

It gave me a precious start, sir; my heart went pit-a-pat,
To see her come down the staircase with no more noise than a cat;
But Stevy was proper angry at bein' so disturbed,
And I saw he was up to mischief, if so be he wasn't curbed.

But *I* never was one for bloodshed, except as a last resort,
And as for striking a lady—well, I didn't think we ort—
And so I says to Stevy, "Lie snug, and quiet keep,
For, can't you see, you dummy, she's a-walkin' in her sleep."

So down we crouched in a corner and watched her sort of glide
Along the moonlit passage, asleep, but open-eyed,
Straight to the safe she went, sir; us tremblin' she'd shift the tools,
And turnin' the handle, she showed us *we'd* been a couple o' fools.

For the thing had never been locked, sir, and we'd wasted 'arf the night
In trying to prise it open. I could a laughed outright,
Old Stevy looked so vicious—but I hadn't time to grin,
When the blood in my veins on a sudden all turned a kind o' thin;

For there she stood afore us, and, curse me! no mistake!
She was no more asleep than you, sir, but precious wide awake;

And the pipe of a big revolver right in our faces gleamed,
As she up with a high soprano and for assistance screamed.

Then Stevy Cox flew at her with a spring like a mad, wild beast,
But she stood as firm as granite, and never budged the least.
Flash! crack! And poor old Stevy come down like a lump o' lead,
And I knowed by the way he'd fallen as my old pal was dead.

And then there was lights and voices, and I see I were out o' luck,
And it wasn't no use, you see, sir, a-paradin' of my pluck,
By attackin' a noomerous 'ousehold, a vicious-lookin' set,
So I stands and I lets 'em cord me, and wonders what I'll get.

But that there gal had fainted, and they carried her away,
And I never knowed all about it till I see her in court that day,
When she told how she'd 'eard a creakin', and had looked outside her room,
And had seen us two a-workin' indistinctly in the gloom.

And how her pa, being seedy, had gone to bed that night
Without, for once, a-seeing as everythink was right;
And how she knew the pistols was in the safe by day,
And she might perhaps get at them if we didn't twig her lay.

Well, we didn't, as you know, sir; poor Stevy Cox and I,
We come to grief that evening, and poor Stevy come to die.
A matter of fourteen year, sir, was what the judge gave me;
But that is one of the risks we run in the trade of Burglary!

Admiral Wargrave Bimble, K.C.B.

I SING the song in mournful numbers
Of Admiral Bimble, K.C.B.,
Who now in Plymouth Churchyard slumbers,
Deceased, too soon, at eighty-three.

For a youthful man was Wargrave Bimble,
Respected Admiral of the White,
As any powder-monkey nimble,
And ever foremost in the fight.

His cheeks were never blanched with pallor,
Though cannon-balls flew round like birds ;
He was a man of dauntless valour—
A man of action more than words.

How did he come to grief, you wonder ?
How was he cut off in his prime ?
What snapped his thread of life asunder ?
What knocked bold Bimble out of time ?

'Twas thus. The fleet lay off Boulŏng—
I cannot say what took it there—
And Wargrave took the chance of going
On shore to get a change of air.

For a change of air he badly needed,
Having been at least a week at sea,
And if ever a man worked hard, why he did,
Although he was a K.C.B.

He sought for simple relaxation
From all his high position's care,
And soon obtained the information
That he would find it at the fair,

Which then, in all its giddy brightness,
Was being on the ramparts held;
The Admiral, with his boyish lightness,
To frolic felt himself impelled.

So up he skipped while Frenchmen wondered,
And muttered low, *Quel grand vieux homme!*
With reckless sous the stalls he plundered
Of macaroons and *sucre de pomme.*

He patronised the special features
Of gay Bouloïng's far-famed fair;
Beheld deformed and other creatures,
And women with abnormal hair.

He played *roulette* for china prizes,
He had his fling at *rouge et noir;*
He bought a mask and strange disguises
He had *à manger et à boire.*

Just when he thought about retiring,
Refreshed, indeed, beyond his hope,
He saw a crowd of folks admiring
A man who walked a lofty rope.

It seemed a risky occupation
Even to one who'd been to sea;
Wargrave was filled with emulation;
"*I'll* have a try at that!" cried he.

"You'd better not," said Signor Liro,
The 'Equilibrist'; "you *might* fall."
"I've said I *will*," replied the hero;
"An Admiral's word's beyond recall.

"I've staked the honour of
the Navy;
Besides, I am a K.C.B.
I swear upon my affidavy
That none of you shall
hinder me."

Then up he climbed—the
fearless Bimble—
And placed his foot upon
the rope;
I've said before that he was
nimble,
But this thing seemed
beyond his scope.

He'd gone, it's generally
reckoned
By those who witnessed what occurred,
One step, and nearly half the second,
When he capsized without a word,

And fell upon the ground below him,
A distance of some seven feet;
A noble subject for a poem—
This mangled Admiral of the Fleet!

They took him home in a gorgeous coffin,
With Union Jack and wreaths bedeckt;
The stricken fleet stayed in the offing,
As far as I can recollect.

In Plymouth Churchyard they dug one more grave
(There was scarcely room that one could see),
And in it they lowered Bimble, Wargrave,
An Admiral, and a K.C.B.

The Barmingham Ghost

BARMINGHAM HALL is an edifice tall,
That stands in a park—closed in by a wall—
With a Tower square,
And gardens fair,
And a beautiful view from everywhere,
And stables fine
(There is room for nine),
And lots of glass, and a grand old vine,
And courts for tennis, and links for go'f
(Whereat none but a Scotsman would venture to scoff),
And a river with trout—
In fact beyond doubt,
Barmingham Hall is as pleasant a place
As you'll find in all England, in this year of grace.

Though 'tis not very old,
There's one thing to be told—
The Tower comprises a room that is vaunted
By a spectre in white
At the dead of night,
In the ancient, respectable way to be haunted.

Lady Tilbury, Barmingham's owner fair,
Is a person of liberality,
And every Christmas she gathers there
Her relations and friends, who all declare
She's a marvel of hospitality.

And while she's known on every side
As a dame of infinite bounty,
Her daughter Miranda, she knows with pride,
Is the recognised belle of the county.
She has also a son—
Thank goodness but one,
For one he-child is always more trouble than three she's—
And little Tom T.,
As you'll presently see,
Is entirely as bad as the rest of his species.

Christmas last year
Was drawing near
When Barmingham's hostess invited her party,
And among them were two
I must mention to you,
To whom Miss Miranda gave welcome most hearty.
There was Captain Jones
Of Her Majesty's Owns
(He belonged to the 4th or Auxiliary Battalion),
And young Septimus Sawyer,
A smart London lawyer—
Each of whom held the other to be a rapscallion.

Of course you guess why—
You can if you try—
On Miranda they'd both cast an amorous eye,
And for *her* each was ready to kill—or to die.
Miranda liked both—she was that way inclined,
And to both she was always most charming and kind—
Between you and me,
Had their number been three,
Or had it been four,
Or even much more,

She wouldn't have been in the least disconcerted,
But with every one would have cheerfully flirted.

Of Septimus Sawyer, Captain Jones
Would speak in the most contemptuous tones
As "a pettifogging attorney";
While the lawyer in turn would daily sneer
At Captain Jones as a "Volunteer,"
A wolf-clad lamb,
A martial sham,
Only fit for a holiday journey.
And so each other they'd fiercely attack—
Of course behind each other's back—
While face to face they'd frown and glare
In a very haughty fashion,
Or indulge, perhaps, in a scornful stare—
Which didn't displease the lady fair,
The object of their passion.

'Tis a very ill wind that blows nobody good—
At least, so I've always understood—
And on this occasion the fates were kind
To small brother Tom, who was much inclined
To make fun of the whole proceedings:
In him the rivals could both espy
A small but valuable ally
To assist them in their pleadings.

'Twas to Captain Jones Tom unfolded a plan
(Having just been tipped as "a good little man"),
Which that person of war
Delightedly swore
Was better than any he'd heard of before;
And what was more,

Exactly the thing wherewith to score
Off the legal bore,
Who, false to the core,
A mask of regard for Miranda wore.

This was the plan
Of the "good little man":—
That Captain Jones
With a skull and bones,
And the best he could do in the way of groans,
Should pose as the Ghost of the Haunted Tow'r,
And visit his rival at midnight hour,
And stand by his bed
Till he shrieked with dread,
And the hair stood upright on his legal head.

"Of course," quoth Tommy,
"You can take it from me,
Miranda'd have nothing to do with a coward,
So the course would be clear
For *you*, never fear,
And to go in and win you'd be promptly empower'd."

These were *not*, p'raps, his actual words, such as "funky,"
But they show what he meant to convey, the young monkey!

Now the captain's room on the Tow'r's first floor
Was exactly below the lawyer's,
And the stairs to the right, as he left his door,
Would lead him to Septimus Sawyer's.
And on Christmas Eve, at the midnight hour,
His face disguised with a mask of flour,
Arrayed in a makeshift doublet and hose,
With phosphorus smeared all over his clo'es,

A chain round his waist going clankity-clanky,
And a sheet thrown over his figure lanky—
Brave Captain Jones
Of Her Majesty's Owns
Wended his way up the winding stair
To give his rival a right good scare.

But he'd clearly reckoned without his host,
For—a thing to have shattered the nerves of most—
Half-way up he encountered another ghost!
Clad exactly the same
To a phosphorus flame
As himself, and as grim
In the shadow dim—
The Captain perceived, what he could not endure,
He had come face to face with the real Simon Pure!
With a yell he fell backward and came on his head
Insensible quite—he was taken for dead—
And thus had no time to perceive that the other,
The spectre descending,
Was equally scared, and a shriek could not smother—
Their cries, in fact, blending;
While both simultaneously fell in a heap,
And little Tom tittered "Here's ghosts going cheap!"

The vile little rascal, I scarce need explain,
Had given both rivals his "plan of campaign,"
With the startling result I've just tried to depict,
That both captain and lawyer were equally trickt.
And the worst of it was—and it made 'em both frantic—
That Miranda was really extremely romantic,
And the dreadful disclosure
Of—well, want of composure

On the part of each timid, though amorous, swain
Made her vow she'd no wish to behold them again.
Perhaps neither was worthy, indeed, of her love,
But that I am sure you'll agree doesn't prove
To anyone decently sober or sensible
Tommy's conduct was other than most reprehensible!

Cross-Examined

WILFRID WASHINGTON WISBOROUGH GREEN was a happy man till lately;
A moderate liver he'd always been, who moved through life sedately;
Contented he as the busiest bee that ever gathered honey,
For he'd wooed and won a lady fair, and he wasn't in want of money.

But, alas! although to every cloud there may be a silver lining,
'Tis equally true that there's oft a storm close by when the sun is shining;
And Wilfrid Washington's time of bliss was brought to a termination
In a manner which filled him up to the brim with shame and indignation.

'Twas thus: In the great matrimonial case of Jones *v.* Jones and another,
He was called as a witness, because he'd been at college with Jones's brother.
'Twixt this fact and Jones's married life he couldn't perceive the connection,
But into the witness-box he went without any great objection.

To the counsel bland on Jones's side he proceeded to acknowledge
That with Jones's brother a term or two he'd certainly been at college;

That he'd found him a decent sort of man, at scholarship not a "flyer,"
Nor yet remarkably pious, perhaps, but neither a thief nor a liar.

Then up there rose, with a buzz in court and a much expectant rustle,
The counsel on the opposite side, the great Sir Fluster Bustle;

And Wilfrid Washington soon exchanged his bland and calm demeanour
For a harassed and worried and frightened air, and he seemed to grow visibly leaner.

For the great Sir Fluster was "on the job," and old stagers who were present
Were perfectly certain he'd make it soon for the witnesses most unpleasant:
And he wished to show that this brother of Jones would no nefarious step shun,
And to do so he'd prove his acquaintances were scoundrels without exception.

His opening question took our friend by surprise, it seemed so funny;
'Twas simply this: "Now, Mr Green, is it true that you owe money?"
A question, perhaps, to which *no* man, old, middle-aged, or youthful,
Could answer off-hand in a negative sense and be altogether truthful.

Now Wilfrid had always paid his bills, but he turned a trifler paler
As he recollected that very morn had brought an account from a tailor,
For which he'd intended to send a cheque, but he certainly hadn't sent it—
And so he answered Sir Fluster, "Yes." And didn't he just repent it!

For his explanation was nipped in the bud, in a manner the judge thought splendid,
And Sir Fluster went on to another point, considering that one ended.
"Now, sir," cried he, "to a lady of means, I'm told, you've paid your addresses?"
And Wilfrid, blushing a fiery red, let fall the meekest of "Yesses."

Sir Fluster gave a triumphant look to the gentlemen of the jury.
"You hear?" he said, an expression of pride superseding his look of fury.
"He admits that for money he's greatly pressed; and what can be more shady
Than to try to recruit his shattered means by pretending to love a lady?"

First hot, then cold, poor Wilfrid felt in a terrible rage and flutter,
But never a word of denial at all would Sir Fluster let him utter;
He was at him again in thund'rous tones, a different subject broaching:
"Now, Yes or No! On your oath, sir, please? Have you ever been flogged for poaching?"

Now, 'tis true that several years ago, when a merry lad at Eton,
Poor Wilfrid *had* trespassed on somebody's land, been caught, and duly beaten;
He'd forgotten the circumstance long before, but the deuce seemed his memory jogging,
For he now recalled, in the witness-box, both the trespassing and the flogging.

He shook like the poet's aspen leaf, he trembled in every muscle,
He began to explain in a broken way, but was stopped by Sir Fluster Bustle.
"Just Yes or No, if you please," roared out that eminent counsel, loudly;
And the jury nudged each other and winked, while the judge looked round him proudly.

Poor Wilfrid! His oath wouldn't let him deny, nor Sir Fluster let him explain it.
He felt his character going fast; he felt he'd never regain it.
Nor was he wrong, for before the end, it was proved beyond contention
He'd committed murder and other crimes too numerous to mention.

The result was he was cut by his friends, blackballed at a club election,
And, worst of all, was cast aside by the object of his affection;
And now he's wandering round the town in a state of hesitation
'Twixt *felo de se* in a painless way, the stage, and emigration!

A Tale of the Scarlet Guards

REMARKABLE man was Private John
Theophilus Peter Hards,
Who the pleasing uniform used to don
Of His Majesty's Scarlet Guards;

He was six feet three in his stocking'd feet,
And six feet four in his boots,
And his chest preceded him down the street,
In line with his cheap cheroots.

The servant girls who thronged the Park,
Where he was wont to walk,
This warrior grand did much remark
And often of him would talk:

But with chin erect and careless eye
And cap at an angle gay,
He unconcernedly passed them by
And pursued his stately way.

There wasn't a cook or a parlour-maid,
There wasn't a pretty nurse,
To whom, if regard to the truth be paid,
He didn't appear averse.
In vain they blushed and in vain they smiled,
And in vain they played their cards,
By none of their lures was e'er beguiled
This Private in the Guards.

Of course, in a man of six feet three
There is ample room for a heart,
And John was provided, like you or me,
With that most essential part;
But in truth he'd given it quite away—
I say it in awestruck tones—
To Honoria Emily Edith Fay,
The daughter of Colonel Jones.

Now Colonel Jones, as all knew well,
Commanded the Scarlet Guards,
And wore a uniform e'en more swell
Than that of Private Hards:
'Tis true he was only five feet two,
And his chest had got misplaced;
Yet that any Private his child should woo—
Well, he felt himself disgraced!

But Honoria Emily Edith Fay,
More loving, perhaps, than wise,
Regarded the thing in a different way,
And the Private with different eyes.
And when with a very polite salute
He paid her a bold address,
She replied to his question of "Would he suit?"
With a very decided "Yes."

Now in circles official
'tis not thought
meet—
While allowing for
Cupid's pranks—
That a Colonel com-
manding should have
to greet
A son-in-law in the
ranks:
'Tis the etiquette of
these men of war
To keep each grade
in its place,
And the fact that a
fellow's six feet and
more
Has nothing to do
with the case.

Besides, the Colonel had other views
For his lovely but wayward girl,
And he'd fondly hoped that she wouldn't refuse
The hand of a certain Earl,

'Gainst whom there was nothing at all to be said—
At least to be said in print—
Except that his hair was inclined to be red
And he'd got a decided squint.

As man to man he couldn't compare
With John Theophilus Hards,
But such comparisons aren't thought fair
By officers in the Guards,
Who don't think much of relative height
But a lot of relative pay,
And the Earl had ten thousand per annum quite—
The Private a shilling a day.

So Colonel Jones did all he could
To discountenance Private John
Theophilus Peter Hards, who *would*
Insist upon going on
With a wooing he found extremely nice
Of a lady far from plain,
Whom he'd kissed already once or twice,
And meant to kiss again.

The Colonel stormed, and the Colonel fumed,
And the Colonel raged and swore;
The Earl indifference assumed,
And declared the whole thing a bore—
But in spite of his aristocratic sneer
He felt annoyed, no doubt,
That a rich and fairly respectable peer
By a Private should be cut out.

Thus matters went on, the talk of the Guards.
Miss Jones was a wretched girl,
For she wasn't allowed to have Private Hards,
And she wouldn't accept the Earl.
And the Earl felt ill in his self-respect,
And the Colonel began to drink,
But soldier John kept his head erect,
Nor once let his courage sink.

And at last he got his reward. His brain
A bright idea evolved,
And he rushed to the City by early train,
To carry it out resolved.
To an office near Capel Court he went
Where some persons of City note,
In the way of financing, assistance lent
Sound companies to promote.

He propounded his plan. They said 'twould do
And they mentioned a suitable Board,
On which were the names of a Member or two,
A Major, a Bart., and a Lord.
And 'twas thought that Colonel Jones, C.B.,
A place might perhaps desire,
While as Managing D'rector 'twas good to see
"Theophilus Hards, Esquire."—

Whose hand those keen financiers shook
With 'gratulatory press,
As they told him that he might surely book
For his scheme a huge success.
And they rubbed their hands, these men of trade,
And they drank to Private Hards,
And the Limited Company soon to be made
Of His Majesty's Scarlet Guards.

Then John went straight to Colonel Jones,
And took him on one side,
And in newly-adopted business tones
And with just a touch of pride,
Explained his splendid and novel scheme
For blending Commerce with War,
Which the Colonel said was an idle dream,
All humbug, and something more.

But when he learnt from Private John
What promotion-money meant,
And saw the Board with his own name on,
He expressed himself content.
"A Limited Company in one way,
We've alway been," cried he.
"But now we'll change our limited pay
For unlimited L.S.D."

"Well, now, if you please," said Private Hards,
"There's another thing we'll discuss.
You were right perhaps in some regards,
At my wooing to make a fuss:
But now the thing is different. I
Am sure you'll understand?
To a Co-Director you can't deny
Your lovely daughter's hand!"

He couldn't. And thus did Private John
Theophilus Peter win
The lady he long had doted on,
And stuck to through thick and thin.
The Earl explained that he didn't care,
Which wasn't exactly true,
And consoled himself with another fair,
As rejected lovers do.

The "Soldiers Limited" went, as you know,
With just a regular "hum,"
The shares, applied for by high and low,
Were soon at a premium.
And Chairman Jones, in the Company's Room,
Made much of Manager Hards,
Who'd won a bride by his splendid boom
Of His Majesty's Scarlet Guards.

Achilles and Elizer

ACHILLES GREEN
Was just nineteen
When first he met Elizer Stickles,
A lovely belle
Of Camberwell,
Whose Pa had {made a plum by pickles,

And also jams—
The latter shams,
Containing trash of all descriptions,
By Stickles cute
Got up like fruit,
And so called on their superscriptions.

I say young Green
Was but nineteen
When at a ball he met Elizer,
With whom he danced
Enthralled, entranced,
Which didn't in the least surprise her.

For she was fair
Beyond compare
Save, haply, to the poet's lily;

And at the ball
She charmed them all,
She was so fragrant, fresh and frilly.

No need to tell
What next befell,
Of course you see what's on the *tapis;*
Suffice to say
He popped one day
Did this precocious love-sick chappie.

Elizer shed
A tear and said,
The while it sparkled on her lashes.
She'd love him not
Until he'd got
A decent pair of *man's* moustaches.

"Yon dash of fluff
Is not enough
For me, in fact, 'twould do for no one."
Achilles sighed
And then replied,
"Swear you will wait until I grow one."

The girl declined
Herself to bind,
But bade him not give up the battle;
Then for a while,
In soothing style,
She charmed him with her maiden prattle.

Achilles went
And straightway spent
His ready cash on some specific,

With which to force,
From their smooth source,
The slothful hairs—of joy prolific.

By dint of much
Of this and such
Assistance as his fingers rendered
By ceaseless twirl,
To his dear girl
A very fair moustache he tendered.

The process, though,
Was rather slow,
And Mister Green was one-and-twenty
Ere he could say,
"Elizer, pray
Inform me if this isn't plenty?"

"If somewhat red
It is," she said,
"As such things go, extremely pleasing;
But though so nice
'Twill not suffice—
Oh no! you mustn't think I'm teasing—

"But latterly
I've come to see
Great beauty in developed muscle,
And you are fat
And weak at that—
Why you'd be nowhere in a tussle!

"Go, get you strong!
'Twill not take long;
And then renew your flattering offer.
I'll not refuse
A man whose thews
And biceps awe each would-be scoffer."

Achilles Green
Was pained, I ween,
But suffering did not make him wiser;
He 'gan to train
With might and main,
And a professional adviser.

He boxed and jumped,
And ran and bumped
His person much with feats gymnastic;
Fat disappeared,
And muscles reared
Their mounds beneath his skin elastic.

When actual test
Had proved him best,
And strongest far of all he'd tried with,
He knocked once more
His love's front door,
Certain his wish would be complied with.

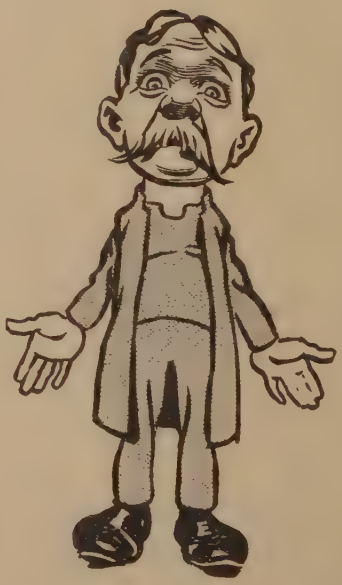
But here again
I must explain
His strength had come by years of labour;

Elizer's mind
Had ceased to find
Much interest in weight or caber.

"You've made, I know,
The longest throw
On record with the heavy hammer,"
(She softly said)
"For so I've read—
I also know you're called the 'Slammer.'"

"But—do not frown—
I've long lived down
My girlish gush for things athletic,
But I'd adore
For evermore
A godly, clerical ascetic.

"Oh, had you been
The Reverend Green
My love had e'en than yours been stronger;
Go, get ordained,
If not too pained
To love me just a little longer."



Achilles went,
Some years he spent
In blossoming into a curate;
Then robed in black
He hied him back,
Convinced she'd be no more obdurate.

Oh, womanhood
So sweet and good,
Why is't that Nature thee enfickles?
Why did our friend
Times without end
Receive such treatment from Miss Stickles?

Who now implied
She'd ne'er be bride
Of one who'd not before been married;
"I much prefer
A widower
To those who single long have tarried.

"For mostly men
Are tiresome when
They've lived to middle age unwedded;
Long solitude
Oft makes them rude,
In discontent they're oft imbedded."

He made reply:
"Elizer I
Would do far more than this to soothe thee;
But thou must swear
To grant my prayer
When I am free again to woo thee."

"Well, be it so,"
She said. "But go
And leave me here to wait in sorrow."
He did so, and
I understand
He wed another on the morrow.

And—such is life!—
He found his wife
Was, for a makeshift, not so dusty;
Elizer S.
Grew less and less
To him—which made her cut up rusty.

She said he'd been
Untrue and mean,
And brought a breach of promise action;
The jury found
A hundred pound
About the proper satisfaction.

No longer belle,
Of Camberwell,
Elizer dwells with old Pa Stickles,
Whose pleasant way
It is to say
Her face reminds him of his pickles.

The Deceitful Vicar

SAINT BARNABAS'S CHURCH upon
A gentle hill did stand;
No gentler hill or nicer church
You'd find in all the land.

Without, 'twas neat and spick and span;
Within, 'twas span and spick;
'Twas in the Græco-Gothic style,
And built of yellow brick.

To godly eyes a church like this
Was one continual feast:
It only to be perfect lacked
A window in the East.

It had, indeed, *a* window there,
As also in the West;
But both were plain, and for the East
Stained glass is much the best.

Of course, you justly say, to put
A proper window in,
The congregation should have found
The necessary tin.

Which observation, I must own,
I thoroughly endorse,
The congregation *should* have found
The needful funds, of course.

And so, no doubt, it would have done
With free subscription list,
But then the congregation, friends,
Itself did not exist.

For all that used to enter in
That Græco-Gothic pile
Were Mr Boodge, the Vicar, and
His curate, Mr Smeyle.

Sometimes these worthy men induced
Their families to go,
(But seldom, for with no one there,
The ladies found it slow).

So generally all alone,
They went through psalm and hymn;
While one day Smeyle would preach to Boodge,
Another, Boodge to him.

Now Vicar Boodge was past the term
Of threescore years and ten,
And Curate Smeyle was bald and grey—
And both were *married* men.

In time the worthy Vicar died,
As sometimes is the case;
The Bishop sent a good young man
To fill the vacant place.

He was a tall and pleasing youth,
His age was twenty-six,
And in a most becoming way
His robes he used to fix.

Do justice to his many points,
I do not think I can;
He had a pleasant reading voice—
And was a *single* man.

And now occurred a curious thing—
At least, I thought it rum—
The people to St Barnabas
In shoals began to come.

The congregation in three weeks
Tremendously had grown;
The ladies took the gentlemen,
And also went alone.

The Reverend Taylor Blue, of course,
Was very, very pleased;
He knew how full the church had been
In time of Boodge, deceased.

On week days he'd two services,
To which the ladies flocked,
Filling the church with flowers and things,
Whereat old Smeyle was shocked.

And thrice on every Sunday he
Failed not to pass the plate,
For the good fellow could not see
"Why Barnabas should wait."

"For pomps and vanities," he cried,
"I care not in the least;
But this, my church, doth sorely need
A window in the East."

And soon there came skilled men from town,
And soon a scaffold rose,
Next Barnabas himself appeared
In variegated clothes.

Surrounded by a halo and
A set of saints select,
Whose names just for the moment, I
Can scarcely recollect.

Then had the Reverend Taylor Blue
The satisfaction great
Of asking the good Bishop down,
The work to consecrate.

This was the Christian triumph of
The Reverend Taylor Blue,
But soon reverses followed, as
They very often do.

. . . . .

The Reverend Taylor was engaged,
But had concealed the fact
From the ladies of St Barnabas—
Wherein he showed some tact.

But on the consecration day
He asked his sweetheart down,
To show her his position and
Importance in the town.

He did not mean to mention that
She was his *fiancée.*
But sometimes things get noised abroad
In most provoking way.

The ladies of St Barnabas
Soon learnt he was engaged,
And, very justly, all of them
Were awfully enraged.

They thought their Taylor Blue a most
Deceitful man had been,
And, in a body, went and loved
The Reverend Johnson Green.

Next Sunday our poor Vicar saw
A beggarly array
Of empty benches in his church,
Which used to be so gay.

And after that he never had
A congregation more,
Save when his wife her *débût* made—
To see what dress she wore.

And once again did worthy Smeyle
Indulge in psalm and hymn,
Alone with Vicar Taylor, who
Took turn about with him.

A Gallant Wescue

W—I daresay you'll hardly cwedit the
stowy I'm going to tell,
For I'm only the son of a Marquis,
a wegular hopeless swell;
And I know that it's most unusual
for a bloated awistocwat
To be anything like a hewo, but—
aw—I flatter myself I'm that.

I know that my gwammah is
decent, that I don't call a fellow
a "bloke";
And if I possessed a donkey—aw—I should not wefer to my
"moke."
I know my coats aren't seedy—and most of my hats have
bwims,
And I'm out of the hunt for the lead in a ballad by G. R.
Sims.

But still, though the fates have waised me amongst the upper
class,
I've done a deed that the bwavest plebeian could scarce
surpass,
A deed of stupendous couwage, and wegular self-sacwifice,
A deed that the fearful stwain of no man could suffah
twice!

Aw—'twas on the sands of Cwomah, where in the autumn tide,
I'd taken my wife and her mothah, for a week at the ocean side;
'Twas near the hour of luncheon, and the burning midday sun
Was wuining my complexion and—aw—bwowning me like a bun.

Unequal to much exertion, I lay on my back on the sand,
And twied to kill time pewusing the book I held in my hand—
'Twas only a guide to Cwomah, of intewest not too deep
To pwevent my gently sinking into a peaceful sleep.

My wife was lazily sketching a distant bathing tent,
My mothah-in-law was scheming how she could circumvent
The cat of the lodging-house lady, as I sank off to dweam—
To be startled a little latah by a woman's piercing scweam.

Wousing myself in a moment, and gazing towards the sea,
I saw at once the tewwor of the howwor that *might* be
If I didn't go to the wescue of a person I abhaw—
My extremely disagweeable and impwudent mothah-in-law!

There she stood on an island, an island of yellow sand,
With a dozen feet of watah between her and the land,
While behind her the German Ocean was advancing slowly near—
No wonder the poor old lady was pawalysed with fear.

I looked awound for assistance, but not a soul was nigh,
All Cwomah had gone to dine early, and had left her there to die,

Unless I pwoceeded to save her!
I, the bloated awistocwat,
Undertake the honour and glowy
of such a deed as that!

As I was—aw—hesitating, up came
my wife and cwied,
"Oh, look, my own Plantagenet,
mamma's cut off by the tide!"
And the lofty cliffs we-echoed that
distant cwy once more:
"Plantagenet! come quickly! and
cawwy me back to the shore!"

I fancy even portahs have *some*
limit to their stwength,
And I doubt if the sturdiest costah
would *quite* have gone the
length
Of wemoving his shoes and stockings and wading thwo' the
tide
To cawwy a female Tichborne back to the other side.

But with a gwand devotion, wegardless of the fact
That I might be wisking my life, fwiends, I nerved myself to
act;
I stwuggled thwo' the watah, it was vewy nigh knee deep—
And on to the lessening island I climbed the bank so steep:

And I put my arms awound her—and at the seventh twy,
I lifted her to my bosom, keeping her—aw—well—aw—her
legs up high—
I baw her thwo' the towwent back to the sandy shore,
Safe from the German Ocean and its most tewwific woar.

'Twas a twuly noble wescue, but there followed in its twack
Suffewing and wetwibution, for I found I'd spwained my back,
And cut my toe on a pebble, and caught a cold in my head—
But the mothah-in-law was wescued whom I'd given up for dead.

. . . . . .

It's stwange how seldom ladies are pwoperly imbued
With anything wesembling the sense of gwatitude,
For neither my wife nor the pawent I'd westawed to her embwace
Seemed to think my stwength and couwage were out of the commonplace.

As I lay on the sands and panted, I heard no words of pwaise—
No thanks for my self-devotion, no pwoffered hewo's bays—
The words that at length bwoke the silence were but thirteen all told:
"Make haste with your shoes and stockings – the cutlets will all be cold."

Vocifera de Courcy

A Romaunce

NO fairer maid in London e'er was seen
Than Jane Vocifera Evangeline,
Sole daughter of De Courcy's haughty Earl:
Tall, slender, and with hair of golden brown,
Soft, tender, and with eyes that could not frown,
She was the *ne plus ultra* of a girl.

To say her noble father loved her well
Gives but faint hint of what no words can tell;
She was, in fact, the apple of his eye,
The pippin of his heart, his fancy's pear,
His bud, his flower, his hothouse blossom rare—
But still he thought of her unhappily.

Not that she gave him cause by word or deed
For grief or anger; all the world agreed
That no more seemly maiden could be met;
She wasn't fast, nor yet unduly shy,
She never flirted, even on the sly,
She talked no slang, she never made a bet:

Was not extravagant in style or dress,
Ate not too much, and ne'er drank to excess;
In short, she was what every girl should be;
But ne'ertheless she grieved her parent sore,
As many a charming maid has done before,
And all through love's most sad perversity.

For Earl De Courcy, seeking but her good,
Seeing her budding into womanhood,
Had found a suitor for her lily hand
In Baron Vickery de Billidoo,
A youth of beauty, wealth, and station, who
Had few superiors in this favoured land.

But Jane Vocifera Evangeline
Loved not the Baron Vickery, I ween,
Although his merit she could not but own;
In fact, she thought most highly of him, but
Her youthful heart to the whole world was shut
Save one, who occupied it all alone.

A struggling artist! Who, for daily bread,
Mixed green with sunny gold, and blue with red,
Imparting splendour to the blankest plane.
Believe me, friends, there's nought so strong as art
To move to sympathy the maiden heart
That to all else indiff'rent may remain.

Vocifera's love was no puffed-up R.A.
In gaudy smoking-cap and velvet gay,

And studio bedecked with flowers rare.
Oh no! he worked beneath the glorious sky,
The cynosure of every passer-by
Upon the pavement in proud Eton Square.

Yes, here upon the dingy paving stone,
Beneath his magic hand such scenes had grown,
As put old Mother Nature in the shade;
Shipwrecks more weird, and seas more bluey-green
Than real seas and shipwrecks could have been,
And sunsets brighter than e'er sky displayed.

What if his coat were tattered, and his talk
All h-less, as he deftly plied his chalk,
Giving occasional touch with skilful care?
What if his doorless show to all were free,
And paid in copper his too casual fee?
Vocifera could see the *genius* there.

And so she loved not Vickery Billidoo,
For she could not divide her love in two,
And William Buggins, artist, had it all.
But Earl De Courcy fumed, and raged, and swore
He'd never heard of such a thing before,
While Vick'ry wept in his ancestral hall.

But Buggins knew not of his lady's love,
Nor dreamt that one so very much above
His lowly station worshipped him like that.
He knew not who the lady was so fair
Who came so oft upon his work to stare
And put so many shillings in his hat.

So one day when De Courcy and a youth
(Lord Vickery de Billidoo, in sooth)
Came nigh unto the artist, arm-in-arm,
He thought 'twas but his panorama rare
Had brought the gentlemen together there,
And started up in ill-concealed alarm,

When Earl De Courcy bade him leave "his pitch"
And seek another one more distant, which
He indicated on a pocket map:
"I ain't a-hurtin' no one here," said Bill,
"And as to movin', blow me if I will!
And who are you as wants to ruin a chap?

"You see them picturs—'ow do you suppose
I am to take 'em with me, if I goes?
Think I can prig the flegstones, I dessay?
Ga-arn, I tell yer; let my picturs be;
Walk your own chalks, these 'ere belong to me—
I pays a bloke f'r'em—'arf-a-crown a day."

"What!" cried the haughty Earl and Billidoo,
In joyful chorus: "Aren't these done by you?"
"Not they, I only just puts touches in,"
Said honest Bill, "I buys 'em off Dick Jones,
As does the art work for nigh all the stones
Round here, and makes a niceish lot of tin."

"I breathe," cried Baron Vickery, "once more."
"Why, what was you a-doin' of before?"
Asked Buggins, puzzled. "Blest if you ain't rum!"
Said Earl De Courcy: "If you will but say
The facts you've told us *here*, across the way,
I'll give you half-a-sovereign—will you come?"

"See here now, guv'nor!" whined Vocifera's love,
"You don't mean any harm to a poor cove
As 'as a wife and seven childer, too."
"What, you are married! You have got a wife!
This is the happiest moment of my life!"
And proud De Courcy wept o'er Billidoo.

Five minutes later Jane Evangeline
Vocifera De Courcy, Beauty's Queen,
Was summoned to her father's private room,
Where she beheld—it gave her quite a start—
The unkempt darling of her virgin heart,
But dreamt not he had come to tell her doom.

"Sit down, Vocifera," said her father, "pray,
And hear what this good man has got to say;
Then go and think it over till the morn."
She listened, trembling, palpitating, pale,
Whilst William gave his plain, unvarnished tale,
When, casting on him just one look of scorn,

She rose and murmured: "Yes, I understand,"
And taking Billidoo's bejewelled hand
Accepted thus the crushing of her heart;
While Buggins, half-a-sovereign to the good,
Went forth to drink, a thing he understood,
And tell his friends about this "rummy start."

The Ghost of the Animaphoneries

THIS currently reported that some of the males employed on the machinery at the Animaphone Building in Old Piccadilly believe that the place is haunted by the ghost of Sir Thomas Savill, on the site of whose former mansion the building stands. Sir Thomas is said to have been one of the most determined opponents of the advance of woman; but his second wife, Lady Araminta Savill, will always be remembered and honoured for her services to the Sex. She it was who introduced the Bill for the Expulsion of Men from Parliament, her husband being an M.P. at the time.*

To talk about Ghosts in this year of grace.
At the close of the twentieth century,
May seem very likely a bit out of place,
And scorn, I'm aware, peradventure, I
May bring on my head—
But, when everything's said,
Who is there who's able to vouch for the dead,
And lay down as a fact
That can ne'er be attackt
That when in a bundle of ashes they're packt,
They've vanished for ever, as 'twere in a passion,
And in no case return in etherealised fashion?

* Extract from *The Gentlewoman*, Xmas, A.D. 2000.

Be that as it may,
It is whispered to-day—
It is true, in a timorous, shy sort of way—
That the Ghost of Sir Thomas
(Who tried to take from us
The thing that we cherish, our feminine sway)
Now wanders around in the dead of the night,
Not making a sound or requiring a light,
In that edifice grand,
When the Mind Machines stand—
The Animaphonery's haunted! Yes, that is indeed what they say!

Sir Thomas, you know,
Lived long, long ago,
When the world and its progress were both very slow,
And women were drudges—
Nay, don't think this fudge is:
Believe me, dear ladies, it used to be so—
Well, Sir Thomas, 'tis said, had a beautiful wife,
Whom he led a most shocking and terrible life,

With his scolding and prying,
And "brook-no-denying,"
And, "Madam, you're lying"—
Each word that he uttered would cut like a knife—
And, the last drop of all, in her goblet so bitter,
On one awful occasion he ventured to hit her.

Thus treated so badly,
At length, very madly,
She jumped o'er the banisters into the hall,
And was killed, it is sad to relate, by the fall!
Now one would have thought that the sight of her corse
Would have filled e'en this cruel old man with remorse,
But he merely indulged in some language of force
And abused her for being "so careless."
And within a month's time he had made up his mind
His victim at once a successor to find,
For she had abandoned him heirless.
So, clad in his best,
He set forth on his quest,
And soon he selected a dame from the rest,
To whom his new passion he warmly confess'd,
'Twas the fair Araminta O'Brady—
A beautiful woman in every sense,
Whose charm was unbounded, whose vigour intense,
Whose courage and intellect both were immense—
A really remarkable lady:
Indeed, *some* people said that this last fact she proved
When she suffered herself by Sir T. to be loved—
His repute was so awfully shady.

For a time he took pride
In his handsome, new bride,
And behaved as a gentleman ought to;

And the chroniclers tell
That she pleased him right well,
As, indeed, she continually sought to.
But after the honeymoon came the bad days,
When he turned once again to his bullying ways
And proceeded to sneer and to cavil;
But this time a Tartar he happened to catch,
And he shortly perceived rather more than his match
Had been found in the new Lady Savill.

He swore and he shouted,
He stormed and he raved,
And flew in a terrible passion;
But—except that she pouted—
His lady behaved
In exactly identical fashion;
And soon old Sir Thomas most painfully realised
That his wife, with the tongue, was himself just idealised!
So, what did he do, since his words couldn't shock her,
But take up his cane and endeavour to knock her.

Now this, as it happened, but proved his undoing,
For, though she'd concealed the fact during his wooing,
Araminta was strong and an excellent fencer,
And she tucked up her sleeve, there and then, to commence her
Campaign of reprisals, and settle off-hand
Whether she or Sir Thomas should paramount stand.
The battle was brief and a little unequal,
And Sir Tommy's submission the obvious sequel—
Bruised, battered, and humbled, he sank in a heap,
And Baronets that day were going quite cheap;
While it has to be added, in this same connection,
His conduct had killed Araminta's affection,

And as bullying his *first* wife had long been his whim,
His second now gloried in bullying *him!*

Her gentle demeanour she dropped like a glove;
He had failed, she declared, to appreciate love;
He had scorned the kind favours she'd meant to confer,
So now *she* would treat *him* as he'd have done her!

Thus the tables were turned,
And Sir Thomas soon learned
What it was to be sat upon, scolded and spurned;
What it was to feel small
And not venture to call
E'en your spirit your own—one is almost concerned
At his utterly wretched and broken-down plight;
But, of course, one must own that it served him quite right.

He grew gradually thinner,
Neglected his dinner,
And wandered about—a dejected old sinner;
His clothes growing shabbier,
His mind getting crabbier,
And his cheeks growing daily more hollow and flabbier;
Whatever appearance his spectre may boast,
At that time *he* certainly looked like a ghost,
As he shuffled along, with a snatching for breath,
To the place whence his first wife had jumped to her death.

Yes, oft in the course of each mis'rable day,
And oft in the night he would wander that way,
And lean o'er the banisters gazing below,
Thinking thoughts that were black with remorse and with woe.

And so to his tragedy, so to his doom,
And so to the end of his story of gloom,
For whether 'twas grief at his crime of the past,
Or whether despair at the present—at last,
He went to the landing one dismal dark morning
And hurled himself over without any warning!

They placed his old bones in a massive elm case
And tucked him away in the usual place;
His widow looked charming awhile in her weeds,
And pursued an unbroken career of good deeds.

Such, friends, is the tale of a man who, 'tis said,
Now wanders among us, although he is dead.
Perhaps only masculine fools will believe it;
The rest of us—well, we can take it or leave it.
Be that as it may,
There are still to this day,
As there always have been through the long course of history,
One or two little things
Of which the bard sings,
"They are wrapt in a veil of impenetrable mystery!"

A Love that did Fade

OH, how I loved Pomanda Dove
No words can e'er relate!
'Twas strange that such a wondrous love
So soon should turn to hate.

We wandered up the mountain side
And also down the same,
Together o'er the heath we hied,
Together home we came.

And scaled we Hampstead's heights so free
Or strolled we in the Strand,
Whithersoever wandered we
I held Pomanda's hand.

But no one seemed to note our love
Or turned back at the sight,
And people said Pomanda Dove
And I did what was right.

My mother even, did aver,
As did my father own,
They'd rather I went out with her
Than I should go alone.

Things went on in this pleasant way;
I never told my love,
But wandered happy every day
With sweet Pomanda Dove,

Until it chanced on Hampstead Heath
I stooped to pick a stone
To hurl it at some boys beneath
Who insolent had grown.

Pomanda bade me lay it down
Or she would tell my pa;
I muttered with an angry frown,
"A time will come, ha! ha!"

And from that day I ceased to love
As I had loved before,
Imperious Pomanda Dove,
Who'd hurt my feelings sore.

Pomanda never knew how she
My heart had disarranged,
Though she and all beside could see
How my behaviour changed.

I would not walk with her again
In Highgate or the Strand,
I scorned to roam o'er down and plain;
I scorned to hold her hand.

She told my father, who replied,
"He's getting past your rule—"
And crumbled up my manly pride
By sending me to school.

And all my lachrymose distress
Could not avert this fate.

. . . . .

Pomanda was my governess,
And I—well, I was *eight!*

Cornelius Tinkle, F.R.S.

CORNELIUS TINKLE, F.R.S.,
Was fond of cockles, more or less,
And prawns as well to some extent,
And e'en with shrimps could be content;
But the favourite dish of Mister Tinkle
Was, beyond a doubt, the periwinkle.

"Yes, winkles," said Cornelius T.,
"Are just the very thing for me!
With vinegar and bread and butter
They really are extremely utter!
And then, you know, they're far less trouble
Than other fish, whose cost is double.

"There's crab and lobster, which some think best,
What good are they, until they're dressed?
And as to oysters, my soul rebels
At the force required to ope their shells;
But to guide the winkle from within
His tiny home, needs but a pin!"

So Tinkle, F.R.S., would roam
To watering-places far from home,

And on the beach he would devour
His loved crustacea by the hour;
I've known him get through in this way
Some eighteenpence in a single day.

In search of winkles, for a spell
At Brighton once he went to dwell,
And one fine day when the sky was blue,
"I know," he cried, "what I will do—
I'll leave awhile the noisy town,
And go for a walk o'er yonder down.

"I'll take with me, in a bag, a quart
Of the very best; it will be sport
To sit on top of that high hill
And of luscious winklets eat my fill;
In solitude to picnic thus
Is what I love—no crowd! no fuss!"

Cornelius donned his overcoat
And wrapped a muffler round his throat,
Then blithely to a shop he hied
Whose dainties he had often tried:
"Good mornin', sir; ah, here's your sort!
The same as we supplies to Court—

"All fresh this morning from the sea."
"A quart, please," said Cornelius T.,
Who, with a pleasant, loving twinkle
Toyed for a moment with a winkle,
Then stood, spell bound, in rapture dumb,
Entranced with thoughts of joys to come.

He left the busy thoroughfare,
And sought the cool and bracing air
Of that high down, and as he walked
Right gaily to himself he talked,
And waved aloft, a joyous flag,
The winkles in their paper bag.

The summit reached—'twas some four miles—
Cornelius, wreathed in cheerful smiles,
Benevolently beamed around,
And laid his treasure on the ground,
Nor feared that any would intrude
On such a lofty solitude.

Then, whistling many a merry note,
He opens wide his overcoat,
Unbuttons next the one beneath,
While smiles his countenance still wreath;
And then, with fingers full of zest
He feels the edges of his vest.

But see! a frown is gathering now
Upon that open, lofty brow:
He stoops, and gazes in dismay
Then says a word *I* couldn't say.
Forgive him for this labial sin—
Cornelius couldn't find a pin!

Without a pin stuck in his vest
He never felt himself quite dressed,
He couldn't have come out without it;
Impossible! No doubt about it,
It must have worked out on the road!
The thought to madness well might goad.

But, anyhow, it wasn't there!
Cornelius, in wild despair,
Searched all his raiment o'er and o'er,
Coat, collar, everything he wore—
In vain! All hopes of winkles died
And Tinkle thought of suicide,

When he beheld, far down the slope,
A sight that filled his breast with hope;
A coach that toiled along the way
Crammed with a picnic party gay,
Who, judging by their cheerful grins,
If *they* had winkles, lacked not pins.

Adown the hillside, helter skelter,
In haste did poor Cornelius pelter;
Reaching the road in half a jiffy,
Though middle-aged and somewhat stiff, he
Pursued the vehicle of pleasure
And caught it, puffing beyond measure.

Its driver seeming disinclined
To stop, our friend hung on behind,
And, as his hand the iron clasped,
With difficulty great he gasped
To those that laughed at him within,
"Could you oblige me with a pin?"

A friendly pair of hands replied.
A pin dropped o'er the coach's side;
Cornelius was too "blown" to thank,
But on the chalky road he sank
And searched to find, with all his eyes,
The coveted but tiny prize.

In vain! the dust was thick and white,
The pin had vanished out of sight.
Our Tinkle in a temper swore,
He'd never been so vexed before—
"I don't believe 'twas one at all,"
He cried; "I didn't hear it fall!"

Grieved, weary, disappointed, slack,
Cornelius Tinkle hied him back.
"The winkles I will fetch," said he,
"And take them home, they'll do for tea."
When, looking up, he saw a sight
Which curdled all his marrow quite.

Upon the down's round top there sat
A small boy, who from out his hat
Was taking one by one the winkles,
Which were not his at all, but Tinkle's.
Yes! there he sat and took them in,
Armed, happy urchin, with a pin.

To say that this was far too much
For flesh and blood is little. Such
The anger of our F.R.S.,
That he once more, I must confess,
Forgot the rules of conversation,
And intimated something-ation.

Then scaled the hill, with fury white.
The little boy, much too polite
To stay where he felt scarcely wanted,
Picked up the winkles and levanted;
But first he thought it well to sprinkle
With empty shells, Cornelius Tinkle.

Cornelius couldn't live the pace
His foe adopted; ceased the chase
And, weak with hunger, rage, and thirst,
His fate with bitterness he cursed
In words beneath an F.R.S.,
Then started Brightonwards, express.

Arrived at length at the parade
He saw a bench, 'twas in the shade,
And being very hot and sad
With all the exercise he'd had,
Right wearily he took a seat—
But jumped up in a fever heat.

For he had sat on something where
There wasn't room to balance fair;
On something which resented duly
The act of being sat on, truly.
In fact, he'd sat upon a pin!
In fact, he'd—sat—upon—a—pin!

He smiled a sickly sort of smile,
'Twas in his coat-tail all the while!
But how it got there, heaven knows;
I can't do more that just suppose
Cornelius, when he rose and dressed,
Mistook his coat-tail for his vest!

The Professor and the Bluebottle

BALD-HEADED and burly, the great man sat,
In his cosy, revolving chair;
On the table before him lay, spread out flat,
His notes and manuscript there.
He was writing an article
On the Greek particle,
Or x and the power of y—
If it isn't quite right, please accept my excuse,
It was certainly something extremely abstruse,
And no wonderful scholar am I.
Be that as it may,
This particular day
The Professor had come
To the point of his sum,
Or the crux of his article
On the Greek particle,
And sat there determined to do or to die.

What a picture he looked as he nibbled his quill,
While his brain seemed to bulge out his head!
There wasn't an argument *he* couldn't kill,
Or a problem too vast for his marvellous skill
To solve with his x, y, or z.
The lines on his brow
Seemed as if with a plough
They'd been cut, as he mentally struggled;
Then his face in a smile
Would relax for a while
As his symbols he inwardly juggled.

He was clearly in form—
'Twas a day for great deeds;
Taking science by storm,
To establish new creeds—
The world would be shortly enriched, it was clear,
And Professor MacSolomon's triumph was near!

But just as his pen to the paper he placed,
Content with his mental conclusion,
An unfortunate sound make him start up in haste
And scattered his thoughts in confusion.
Buzz! buzz! buzz!
'Twas a fly of the bottle variety
That most *in*-opportunely
And weirdly bassoonly
Was proffering him its society.
The Professor sat back,
And his visage grew black,
He detested all flies more than poison;
(And the worst of the lot 'll
Be owned the blue-bottle,
Which keeps such a wearisome noise on);
He rose from his seat
In a feverish heat,
And, his handkerchief waved like a banner,
Proceeded to go
For his blithe little foe
In a grim and implacable manner—
For he knew not a line would there ever be written
Till the said little foe to the dust had been smitten.

The Professor his temper soon lost, I'm afraid,
And besides the Professor was stout;

And the blue-bottle fly, not the least bit dismayed,
But regarding the thing as a game that was played,
Kept provokingly buzzing about,
Here, there, and everywhere!
How professors *can* swear!

Well, he said more than "hang"
When his fist came down bang
On the back of his wooden arm-chair—
Just *after* the fly had been there—
And more too, I think,
When he capsized the ink
By a shot at his foe as it stood on the brink,
And gave him a wink—
But the foe never ruffled a hair!

So the battle was waged.
The Professor, enraged,
At the dodging musician his handkerchief hurled,
Then viciously whipt
With new manuscript
The air unresisting through which the thing whirled;
Striving to kill
Vainly, until
This was the bill:—

Item, a smashed occasional chair;
Item, a table, its legs in the air;
Item, a curtain torn and rent;
Item, a shattered ornament;
Item, a carpet stained with ink;
Item, a chain with a broken link;
Item, a pane of fractured glass—
Through which behold serenely pass

A gay, indifferent blue-bottle fly,
Out in the air, 'neath sunny sky,
Leaving behind a scholar weak,
Too much exhausted even to speak.

And so, through a thing whose avoirdupois
Is a millionth that of an average boy,
An end was put to a mighty plan
Of an intellectual, big-brained man;
And the world of a benefit was bereft,
For he never resumed the task he'd left,
And never again, while insects buzz 'll
He tackle again that particular puzzle!

Lancelot and Gladys:

Or, The Man, The Maid, and The Mahatma

SING in sad and sorrow-laden tones,
Of gentle Gladys Byng and Lancelot Jones:
A tale of love, and grief, and mystery too—
Hearken with sympathy while I tell it you.

Lancelot was tall and rich, and mostly moved
In good society. So Gladys loved.
Gladys was fair and even-tempered. So
Lancelot returned her love, and let her know.

Thus their affection went its pleasant way,
And designated was the happy day,
When each the other might, in language terse,
Call ownest own, "for better or for worse."

But who can e'er foretell what fate may bring?
Lancelot had even bought the wedding-ring;
All was prepared, in short; when, at a blow,
His bliss was shattered, and his hopes laid low.

'Twas thus: He called one afternoon to see
His Gladys, and to have a cup of tea—
When, waiting in the boudoir for his fair,
He thought he heard her voice upon the stair.

Quick to the door he sped and looked without,
And there indeed was Gladys, beyond doubt;
But—horror of horrors!—a stranger bold had placed
His forward arm around her tiny waist.

And Gladys seemed extremely well content;
She struggled not, nor asked him what he meant,
But, on the contrary, actually did this—
She lifted up her lips for him to kiss.

To say that Lancelot Jones was horrified
At seeing this behaviour of his bride—
That was to be—is, as you all may guess,
His feelings very faintly to express.

He fixed a fiery gaze on her—on them—
They took no notice; then he said "Ahem!"
Still did they turn not, neither did they quit
Their fond embrace, nor cease to spoon one bit.

But as young Lancelot mounted up the stair,
Borne on by mingled anger and despair;
They went up quickly, and, turning to the right,
When he turned also, they were out of sight!

So he descended, with emotion dazed;
Entered the boudoir, and was there amazed
To see Miss Gladys, unconcerned and cool,
Quietly sitting on the music-stool.

She rose to welcome him, and showed surprise
When he repulsed her, anger in his eyes,
And when he dubbed her "wicked, heartless flirt!"
She seemed astonished, not to mention hurt.

Either, thought he, she acts extremely well,
Or there's no harm in what appeared so fell;
Perhaps some long-lost brother this may be,
Or else some uncle—just come home from sea.

But no. It was not thus that Gladys fair
Explained the startling episode of the stair;
She simply said, and looked him in the face,
That she, for hours, had not been near the place.

She added that she would not like to think
Her future husband could be prone to drink,
But really! Well, his face was very red,
And she could not make sense of what he said.

Words led to words—in even angrier tones.
Gladys was soon "Miss Byng"—Lance, "Mr Jones."
No tea they shared; no, not one single cup,
And Lancelot felt, on parting, all was up.

They both passed wretched days and sleepless nights,
Till Lancelot, pining for his lost delights,
"His eyes deceived him," did himself persuade,
And went once more to call upon the maid.

But when he reached her door, a horrid sight
Convinced him that his doubted eyes were right.
For through the open window he beheld
Her form, which once again that stranger held.

This was too much. So Lancelot did not call,
But hurried home to end things once for all.
He wrote a brief line, breaking off the match,
And sent Miss Byng her letters in a batch.

Pained, but prepared, the girl made no delay,
But told the lawyer on that very day,
And Lancelot was, when next he saw her face,
Defendant in a Breach of Promise Case.

It went against him ; he could not produce
The stranger whom he made his chief excuse ;
While Gladys, 'gainst the charges of his eye,
For each occasion proved an *alibi*.

To pay the damages he could not shirk ;
This done—and costs beside—he set to work
To banish the remembrance from his mind,
And in some new pursuit relief to find.

'Twixt billiards and Theosophy his choice
Hovered some little while, but I rejoice
To say he took the latter, and became
To put it slangily, "clever at the game."

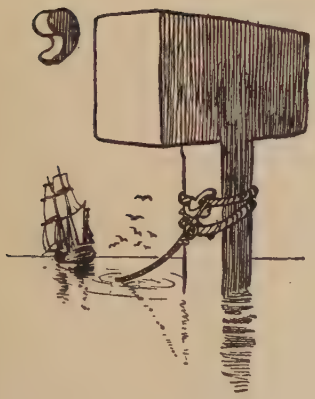
There's neither need nor space to mention here
The details of his mystic, new career ;
Enough to say that he, when old and grey,
Met a Mahatma from Thibet one day.

He recognised at once that Stranger quaint.
The shock it gave him nearly made him faint—
This was the man who twice his arm had placed
Around Miss Gladys' immaterial waist.

It was her "Astral Body" Lance had seen,
And she herself quite innocent had been!
Her "Number Two," as Mr Stead would say,
Alone had gone on in that barefaced way.

Thus ends my tale. The moral of it's plain:
What's happened once may well occur again.
And this is what you'll do if you are wise—
Believe a lady's word before your eyes!

A Contrairy Breeze



I WAS in the brig, the *Nancy Trig*,
We were sailin' on the main,
First, as I guessed, nor'-east by west,
And then right back again—
For the wind was cruel contrairy

We'd a fustrate crew, and the skipper, too,
Was an easy one to please;
There was none aboard as we could afford
To blame for that there breeze—
But it sartinly was contrairy.

From day to day we made no way,
Which at first we didn't mind,
For with quoits and skittles, and grog and vittles,
Amusement we could find—
Till the wind left bein' contrairy.

But arter a twelvemonth's standin' still,
When we was tired o' play,
The cap'n come a-lookin' glum,
And thusly he did say—
"This 'ere wind's cruel contrairy."

And then he spat and looked around,
And then he says, says he,
"For more nor a year we've lain about here,
Wherever it may be—
Where the wind's so durned contrairy.

"Our owners, o' course, 'll think we're a loss,
Which 'll give 'em a deal o' pain;
Our wives 'll shed a tear for the dead,
And then they'll marry again—
For women is so contrairy.

"But though that's bad, it ain't the wust,
Which is, if you want to know:
We've very little more in the vittle store,
And the grog's a-gettin' low—
Oh, cuss this wind contrairy!

"Now, ain't there a man as can hit on a plan
For makin' a bit o' way?
And any reward as I can afford
I'll very gladly pay,
To cheat this breeze contrairy!"

And then the skipper went below,
And we knew as things was queer,
And we left off skittles and eked out the vittles,
And felt as life was drear—
With the wind so cruel contrairy.

Well, that day week we was pretty nigh dead,
And longed for a drop o' drink,
And, overcome by famine, we was all of us a-dammin'
And swearin' like anythink—
For the wind still kep' contrairy—

When up to the vessel's poop I climbs,
And looks around the main,
And, over the side a thing I spied
As gave me hope again—
Tho' the breeze *was* so contrairy.

What gave me hope was a length o' rope
As stiff as a maintopmast,
And I see clear as day why we made no way,
For we was hanchored fast—
Which made the wind seem contrairy.

Then up I leapt, and I almost wept,
As I sung out, "Boys, yeo-ho!"
And as soon as we was able we cut that cable,
And homeward we did go—
With the wind no more contrairy.

And the skipper he come, and he said, "It's rum
As we never noticed that afore;
But never once again do I sail upon the main
If you, Bill, stays ashore—
Lest the wind should turn contrairy!"

The Ugly Face

A Moral Ditty

OME years ago a babe was born—I need not name the place—
With a puffy, pasty, podgy, gutta-percha sort of face,
Which wrinkles sub-divided into funny little bits,
While beady eyes peer cunningly behind two tiny slits.

His nose was like a mushroom of the foreign button sort,
His form was quaint and chubby, and his legs were extra short;
That his nurse spoke like Sapphira, I have always had a fear,
When she said he was a "beauty," and a pretty little "dear."

Yes, such remarks were really of the truth a dreadful stretch,
For, in point of fact, that baby was a hideous little wretch;
And in course of time he grew up—though a loving mother's joy—
Into quite a champion specimen of the genus "ugly boy."

At school his teasing comrades gave him many comic names,
And he became the victim of all sorts of naughty games;
Nor did the master like him, for he felt that such a face,
'Mid a row of ruddy youngsters, was extremely out of place.

In time, his father placed him in the City—as a clerk—
Where his personal appearance excited much remark;
But he fell out with his principal, whose customers complained,
That his clerk was making faces, and said "Bosh!" when he explained.

On perceiving from the office that he never would be missed,
As Mr Gilbert puts it, he determined to enlist;
And so one summer afternoon he started forth in search
Of a sergeant who perambulates close by St Martin's Church.

The sergeant burst out laughing when he'd uttered his request,
And declared that, of a batch of jokes he knew, this was the best;
"'Tis a pity you're too short, my lad," he then went on to say,
"For wid *that* face ye'd froighten ivery inimy away!"

In a fountain which played handy—it was near Trafalgar Square—
He was rushing off to drown himself, the victim of despair,
When he knocked against a person he'd not seen for quite an age,
Who had left his home some years before, and gone upon the stage.

To this friend he soon narrated his distressing tale of woe,
And declared his case was hopeless. But the actor said, "Not so.
There's *one* thing, my fine fellow, that as yet you haven't tried,
Where your face will be your fortune, and a pound or two beside.

"With a mouth like yours to grin with, and your too delicious squint,
And the ears that Nature's given you with such a lack of stint,—
No matter what an author may provide you with to speak,
You're a ready-made comedian—worth your fifty quid a week."

And it was so. Though he started at a figure rather less
Than the one that I have mentioned, still the truth I but express
When I say he now is earning such a wage as wouldn't shock
A respectable Archbishop or a fashionable jock.

And the face that all men sneered at, now is very much admired,
And the public ne'er, apparently, of watching it grows tired,
And the merchant who dismissed him, in the stalls is wont to sit,
While the sergeant and his sweetheart are applauding from the pit.

The moral of my narrative is easy to espy,
But still I'd better mention it, lest some should pass it by:
Though it's often very troublesome indeed to find it out—
There's a proper sphere for *everyone*, beyond the slightest doubt.

Pennsylvania Penn

PENNSYLVANIA PENN—
Commonly called P. P.—
Was awfully fond of the men,
Who were awfully fond of she.

But Pennsylvania Penn
Was single nevertheless;
She had been engaged to ten,
But had chucked them all, I guess.

Now it takes some years or so
Ten times engaged to be—
Consecutively, you know,—
Like Pennsylvania P.;

And as the time rolled by,
She was getting past her bloom,
When she made up her mind to try
A matrimonial boom.

So she circularised the ten
She'd formerly thrown aside,
But six of those fickle men
Had each got another bride;

And the rest didn't feel disposed
To enter the lists again;
Their wounds, they said, were closed,
And closed they should remain.

So Pennsylvania P.
Just cast around elsewhere;
She painted her face, and she
Persistently dyed her hair.

She rubbed her wrinkles back,
And padded her dress beneath;
She fixed her eyes with black,
And she bought a new set of teeth.

But all was of no avail;
And Pennsylvania Penn
Learnt what it was to fail
In trying to catch the men.

"*Nil desperandum!*" though,
Exclaimed the dauntless maid,
"On a different line I'll go,
And make it a matter of trade."

So she went to the bank cashier,
And he sent a rumour round
That "Pennsylvania theer"
Had got ten thousand pound.

Then each of those married men
He went and got a divorce,
And the whole of the fickle ten
Returned to the siege in force.

For they all had been to the bank
And inquired about Miss P.,
And with the cashier they drank
So as not to expose their glee.

And presents of jewels and clothes
From all of 'em P. P. got,
And then very sensibly chose
The richest man of the lot.

But when her husband found
That she wasn't worth two p'un' ten,
He said he would rather be drowned
Than live with the late Miss Penn.

Which suited her just as well,
For it left her rich and free:
And that's all I have to tell
Of Pennsylvania P.

The House Brought Down!

Or, The Drama in Earnest

ETHINKS 'tis a very remarkable
"sign
Of the times"—I must own this
expression's not mine—
How in these latter days
The theatrical craze
Has obtained such a hold on all
grades of society;
And this love of the stage
Is a mark of the age
Which is not in accord with *my* views of propriety.

'Twas only last week a young lady I know
Invited the world in a body to go
(On a wretched wet day)
To a dull *matinée*,
When she made her *début*, in a style most peculiar,
In a part which to act is
A thing of long practice,
Surely ne'er was conceit more absurd or unrulier!

How can amateur actors commence at the top
Of the Thespian Tree, and avoid coming flop?

It would seem very queer
If a young volunteer
Should begin by commanding the Royal Horse Artillery;
Or if babies should bilk
Their allowance of milk,
And insist upon sucking from bottles of Sillery.
So it mostly occurs
That an amateur errs,
And gets chaffed for possessing less skill than audacity,
When he tackles a part,
Not possessing the art,
And exposes his natural want of capacity—
And what is more painful, his lack of sagacity.

I'm bound to admit
I was once rather bit
By the mania myself in a mild sort of way;
Paid a half-guinea fee
To the Zeus A. D. C.,
And found myself cast for a part in a play.
I think 'twas the Bandit Brothers of Brighton—
Or Eastbourne or Yarmouth—
Or Hastings or Barmouth—
I forgot for the moment which place was the right 'un—
But I know there's a chief,
Who at last comes to grief,
After numerous blood-curdling adventures and rescues,
Such as frequently writers in modern burlesque use.

Now the part of the chief,
Who comes to grief,
Was secured by a hot-tempered youth named O'Keefe;
In spite of the jealousy
Of two other fellows, he

Cast himself as the leader, without hesitation,
And resented remarks with extreme indignation.
So the others were fain
Their rage to contain,
And one e'en accepted the part which was reckoned
To be, on the whole, the one that ranked second.

The local Town Hall was engaged, which would hold
Some three hundred people—the tickets were sold—
The purchasers wishing to help the good charity
We played for, some adding
Donations, and gladding
The treasurer's heart to a state of hilarity.
Rehearsals galore
Were to take place before
The *début* on the boards of the Zeus A. D. C.—
For the members were earnest as earnest could be.

Well, the opening one
Was rather good fun,
For we found that the practice of vigorous fighting
'Twixt bandits and coastguards was rather exciting;
But later, you know,
It got rather slow
For those who were "supers" to constantly go
And lay the same victims perpetually low
With time after time the identical blow.

But Mr O'Keefe,
Who played the chief,
Had a time less monotonous, greatly, than ours,
And always kept up the rehearsals for hours.
Still he wasn't quite happy,
And often got snappy,

For Richard McEwen, who'd wanted to play
The part of the chief, and used often to say
He'd have done it himself in a much better way,
Was by no means contented, thus feeling superior,
To play "seconds" to Keefe, his decided inferior.
So he did what he could
To annoy the great K.,
And misunderstood
In a scandalous way
All the stage manager's proper directions,
And refused to accept either hints or corrections.

Now, in the third act, the time being night,
The scene on the beach, there's a hand-to-hand fight
'Twixt the bandit chief
(That's Mr O'Keefe)
And the coastguard captain, Mr McEwen,
In which 'tis agreed
That the first shall succeed,
While the latter comes in for no end of a hewing.

But Richard McEwen was strong and quick,
And a very good hand with the single stick,
And he didn't see why
He should quietly die
By the sword of a man much less clever at fencing;
So he *would* give a twist
Of his muscular wrist,
Which disarmed the brave bandit soon after commencing.
The rage of O'Keefe
Exceeded belief
For McEwen *would* do it at ev'ry rehearsal;
The manager vowed
It could not be allowed,
And the company's protests became universal.

McEwen explained
That he thought the piece gained
By his showing his skill—how could any one doubt it?

"There's more credit," said he,
"To the chief than there'd be
If he killed a weak chap who knew nothing about it."
And he went on to say that O'Keefe wasn't fit
For the part of the chief, and could not fence a bit.
O'Keefe, in reply,
Gave McEwen the lie,
And vowed he would kick him,
Or otherwise "lick" him,

While his eyes flashed like those of a tiger or leopard. He
Induced us to think
That his rival *must* shrink
From placing himself in such obvious jeopardy.

He did so—and afterwards things all went smoothly,
While O'Keefe played his part in a manner quite Booth-ly,
Or, as somebody said, without meaning to gush,
He'd have put Henry Irving himself to the blush.

. . . . . .

As the time for the public performance grew nigh
The local excitement ran awfully high,
For reports had been spread
(By the club, be it said)
That something uncommonly good was expected,
And so, on the day
We turned people away
From the doors where quite early a crowd had collected.

. . . . . .

Well, the overture over, the drama began,
But, thanks to our casual property man,
The rise of the curtain
Was somewhat uncertain—
In fact, for five minutes or so the thing *stuck*—
Which was terrible luck!
And affected the play,
At least, so I should say,
For the opening act went decidedly tamely
Though O'Keefe and his bandits stuck to it most gamely.

There was not much applause,
Which perhaps was because
Our audience was certainly very genteel,
And thought it was rude folks should show what they feel

Still, we should have preferred
Some "bravos!" to have heard.
And two or three gentlemen, seemingly napping,
We thought might have better employed themselves clapping.

If first act went badly
The second quite dragged;
The actors worked sadly,
All interest flagged,
And though very often we caught people laughing,
The occasions they chose made us think they were chaffing.

Next came act the third, in which the O'Keefe
Was to be very great as the terrible chief,
For in it he killed
His rival, and spilled
The gore of the coastguards all over the coast,
And eloped with a bride,
Who beheld him with pride,
Though she could herself of a coronet boast.
As a matter of fact
We hoped that this act
Would redeem in a measure the ones that preceded,
And it opened so well,
And O'Keefe looked so swell,
That at last we obtained the encouragement needed.

And then came the fight.
No one thought, on that night,
That M'Ewen would dare try his vile *tour de force*,
And the battle began
On the well-rehearsed plan,
While the supers made ready to bear off his corse.

. . . . .

Whatever induced him to do it? Who knows?
He says 'twas an accident. Well, I suppose,
When a man tells you that,
A denial too flat
Might perhaps lead to arguments, even to blows.
But, be that as it may,
The O'Keefe *couldn't* slay
His opponent, whose wrist
All at once gave a twist,
And the brave bandit's weapon went flying away!
The supers stood spellbound, as over the stage
Strode the maddened O'Keefe; in a frenzy of rage,
He picked up his sword and then went for his foe

In terrible earnest.
Oh, that was the sternest,
Most truculent fight
Ever fought in the sight
Of innocent people, who shouted "Bravo!"
Little knowing how soon the real blood was to flow.

Thank Heaven, the swords
Were as blunt as two boards!
Otherwise, the result would have been simply frightful.
As it was, every whack
Made the deuce of a crack,
While the audience considered it clearly delightful.
With th' applause at its height,
This most bloodthirsty fight,
By a blow from the skilful M'Ewen was ended.
O'Keefe fell as if dead,
With a gash on his head,
The supers rushed forward, the curtain descended.

. . . . .

Talk about clapping!
And walking-stick rapping!
While even the gentlemen formerly napping
"Bravo'd" themselves hoarse
With the whole of their force,
And made their fat palms quite tender with slapping.
"O'Keefe! and McEwen!" was shouted by all.
Why the deuce don't they come and acknowledge the call?
Then some people said,
"That blow on the head—
Was it part of the play?—or"—ah! see in the hall
A youth—he's a member, as that ribbon shows—
See! to Dr Pomander he stealthily goes—

To the doctor who sat
With his coat and his hat
Just under his seat, that he need not delay
If a patient should send to fetch him away,
But who never expected to find *in* the hall
A patient—and much less a bandit—at all.

. . . . .

Anxiety now
Takes the place of the row,
And people talk low
And ask, "Shall they go?"
When before the dropped curtain there comes with a bow,
The stage manager suave,
With a countenance grave,
To announce that although there's nought serious the matter,
(Here applause and some chatter)
Still, in the late fight,
The *wrong* man beat the *right*
And that therefore the show was at end for the night.

. . . .

Thus the bandit chief
Came duly to grief,
Though not in the way that the author intended,
And as for his head,
Ere he went home to bed,
The doctor had seen that 'twas properly mended.

. . . . .

This, friends, was the end of the drama for me,
And for most, I believe, of the Zeus A. D. C.,
Whose meed of success
May indeed have been less
Than that usually obtained by such clubs and societies;
But be that as it may,
I have e'er, from that day,
Placed amateur acting among th' improprieties.

Willyum and Robbut

A Romance of 'Ampstid 'Eaf

NOW Willyum was a sojer bold,
And Jine she was a cook,
An' Robbut was a chimley-sweep
As for Miss Jine a fancy deep
'Ad been and gone and took.

An' Willyum 'e loved Jine as well,
An' Jine she loved 'em bofe,
An' unto Bob, likewise to Bill
(As fickul wimming sometimes will),
She'd plighted of 'er trofe.

An' so, between vese galiant foes
'Ard words would orften fly:
"Ugh, Blackfice!" Willyum 'e would snort,
"An' Black 'Eart!" Robbut would retort,
While Jine stood larfin' by.

At larst one d'y bold Willyum said,
"I've 'ad enuf ov vis;
Ve time 'as come for tew decide
Which of us tew shall call yew bride—
So chewse between us, miss."

An' Robbut, 'e said also "Chewse.
For years wivout no fuss
My soot I've been and paid to yew,
An answer I'm entitled tew,
An' 'opes yew'll mike it 'Yus.'"

Says Jine, "To my true happiness
Vis is a 'eavy blow;
O' course I cannot 'ave you bofe,
An' to 'urt eever I am lofe
By s'yin' of 'im 'No.'

"But in ve books which I 'ave read
I find it is O.K.
For rivals for a lidy fair
To meet in comback an' to spare
'Er feelin's in *vis* w'y.

"Ve victor with 'er own white 'and
She gives ve lovin' cup."
"I see," cries Willyum; "an' it's time!
We'll see if chimley-sweeps is gime—
Come, sooty, put 'em up!"

"Not so," says Jine, an' steps between.
"No fistesses. Oh, fie!
Oh, Willyum, I'm ershimed of you!
Vat's not what proper 'eroes dew
Wiv lidies standin' by.

"Gow, gow!" she cried, "to 'Ampstid 'Eaf,
When Pheebius gilds ve pline;
Gow harmed, like princes, to ve teef
An' dror yer weppings from ve sheef,
An' battle for your Jine!"

"I'm on," says Willyum. "So am I,"
Says Robbut, "but I begs
For choice o' tewls ter stipperlite,
For I am not yewr fightin' wite,
An' shorter in ve legs."

Ver ain't no need to mention 'ere
What else vey 'ad to s'y.
Next mornin' vem vere galiant tew
Vey turns up at ve rondivew
All ready for ve fr'y.

In Willyum's 'and 'e 'eld a sword,
A pistol in each bewt.
But Robbut, 'e'd acrost 'is back
A different wepping of attack—
A great big bag o' sewt.

'E up and whirls it round 'is 'ead.
"Come on," he cries to Bill.
"I ain't no swordsman, I can't shewt,
I've chose my ammernition—sewt!
I'll smuvver yew, I will!"

Now Willyum wore 'is yewniform,
And gawdy was 'is coat;
'E 'ad no stummick for attack
As turned ve scarlick into black
An' stuffed up all 'is froat.

"Stand orf!" he cries. "If that's yer l'y,
Such fings ain't tew be borne.
If yew was to arst me, I fink
We'd better go an' 'ave a drink,
An' call ve battle drorn."

"Agreed," says Robbut, and vey went;
An' so ve lovin' cup
Was passed to Bill and back agine,
An' ven to Bob, but not by Jine—
Whom bofe of 'em give up.

An' Jine, on whom vey never called,
At first inclined ter fret;
But afterwards, wivout mishap,
She took up wiv a biker chap
As 'elped 'er tew ferget.

Simon Smith, Inventor

SIMON SMITH was an inventor, who invented several things — useful, ornamental, and funny;

And the only thing that he couldn't invent was a satisfactory means of making money.

He used to say to his numerous friends that he had been born under an unlucky star,

Which reminds me that he invented a machine for determining exactly *what* stars are.

But I understand that the apparatus was too complicated for use, even in modern astronomy,

And it also, I believe, could hardly compete with present appliances in the matter of economy.

Nevertheless it was most ingenious, as also was his patent Automatic Boot Button of pure gold,

Which, if it hadn't been considerably more expensive than the boots themselves, would no doubt have been largely sold.

As it was, only the original model, which cost seven pounds, was ever finished,

And the utility of the invention to its originator could hardly have been diminished.

The next thing Simon did was to form a Syndicate to work his Patent Corn Extractor,

In which some objectionably odoriferous compound happened to be the principal factor;

So the public preferred to have corns, and the Syndicate, of whose shares Simon was the largest holder,
Came irretrievably to grief, involving him in financial difficulties. However, he designed a Folder—
A machine that was, for wrapping up newspapers in ha'-penny postal bands—
The only objection to which was, that one could wrap 'em up much quicker with one's hands.
Somehow it wasn't successful; no more were his numerous and cleverly-devised schemes
For making Self-striking Lucifer Matches, Imitation New Zealand Mutton, and Portable Pocket Ice-creams.
These and other failures, too numerous to mention, had by no means succeeded in overcoming his pluck,

When one day he went for a sail on the ocean to try if he couldn't change his luck,
By perfecting his new Non-collapsable Life-buoy, constructed to carry a supply of food and brandy,
When it unluckily capsized in deep water, and as no one happened to be handy
To throw him his own Patent Apparatus for Rescuing Shipwrecked Men
(By the aid of which he could easily have been saved, and brought to shore there and then),

Why, he was inevitably compelled to sink to the bottom,
which being afterwards dragged, he was found
By a lot of stupid people who knew nothing whatever about
his Registered Restorative for the Actually Drowned.
And so there was an end of him; but I'll just mention one
thing to prevent any scoffin'—
They made one of his inventions come in useful at last, by
burying him in his own Patent Hygienic Coffin!

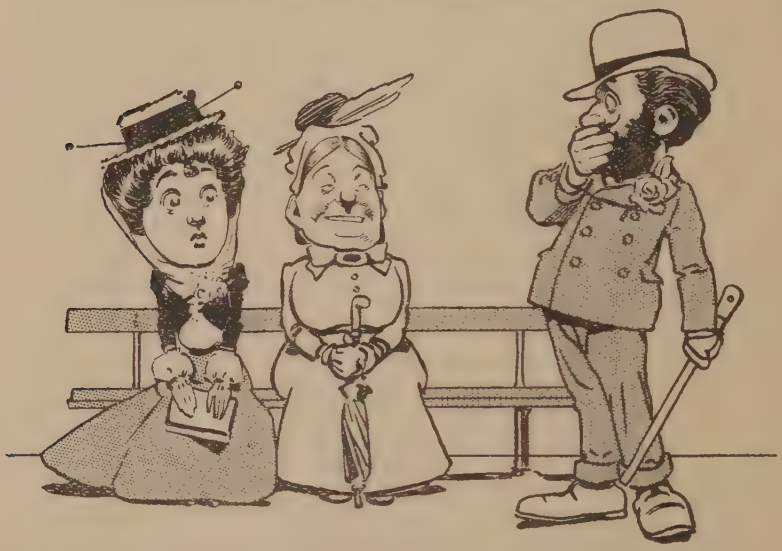
The Stowaway

ILL you walk into my cabin?"
said the skipper to the mate,
"And listen to a story I am anxious to relate?
We are due to sail to-morrow, but I'm very much afraid,
Unless you kindly help me we shall be a bit delayed."

"Aye, aye," the mate responded, but I'm sure you won't expect
I should reproduce the language which these sailor men affect;
Suffice it, he was willing, and within the cabin walked,
Where he sipped his grog and listened while the captain slowly talked.

The tale that he unfolded was a common one, no doubt:
He had done the thing he should not, and had quickly been found out:

He had offered a fair damsel the devotion of a life,
And she had just discovered he'd already got a wife.



"That gal you saw me kissin' t'other day upon the beach
Has vowed she's going to sue me for damages for Breach,
And I've reason to anticipate that, ere this port we quit,
The lawyer-men will come aboard and serve me with a writ.

"The only thing that I can do, it seems, is just to hide—
You can lock the cabin door and tell the crew I'm sick inside;
And if the writters come aboard, why let 'em look around—
I'll be hiding in the cargo where I'm sure I'll not be found.

"But, in case they come across me, I'm going to be disguised,
I'll shave my beard and whiskers so's I shan't be recognised;
And if they *should* discover me, why, all *you've* got to say
Is, you've got no doubt whatever but that I'm a stowaway."

The mate agreed to do so, and with sympathy behaved,
While the captain took a razor and his hairy visage shaved,
Then he donned an ancient costume which he took from out a bag—
A veritable masterpiece of ventilated rag.

"Your own mother wouldn't know you," cried the mate in huge delight.
"Why, I never *see* such features as your razor's brought to light!
No wonder you wore whiskers!"
—But the skipper thought it best
That on such a serious matter they should neither of them jest.

In the hold among the cargo, behind some cotton bales,
They made a little snuggery with bits of worn-out sails,
And in it they put biscuits and bottled beer and cheese,
That the captain might while hiding be fairly well at ease.

The mate professed some envy and declared *he* wouldn't mind
A voyage in a spot so snug, if perhaps a shade confined;
And then he wished the skipper luck, and shook him by the hand,
And went on deck to carry out the little scheme they'd planned.

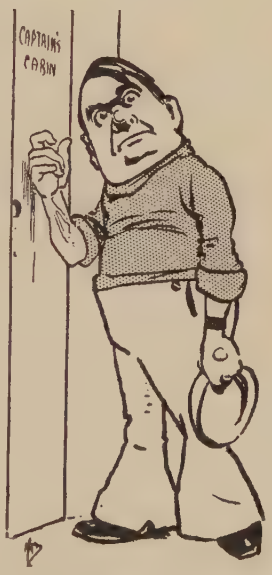
Next morning, as the captain feared, there came aboard the ship
Two suspicious-looking gentlemen, who asked to see the "skip,"
And the mate expressed a hope that they to wait could time afford,
And informed them most unblushingly, "he hadn't come aboard."
"He's bound to do so shortly," they remarked. The mate replied:
"If he don't we'll sail without him, for we mustn't lose the tide."
And then he winked around him at the members of the crew,
To whom he'd told another tale, which also wasn't true.

To abbreviate my story, so far as this may be,
At the proper time appointed the mate put out to sea,
And the disappointed callers, having searched the ship in vain,
Were placed within their little boat and rowed ashore again.

Then the mate began to chuckle, and to grin he seemed inclined;
It was evident his feelings were of quite a pleasant kind;
He bustled all the crew about and whistled all the while,
And quaffed a glass of grog or two in very cheery style.

When the ship had gone upon her way a score of knots or so,
He bade an able seaman to the captain's cabin go
And ask if he felt better; but the seaman, by-and-by,
Said the skipper to his knocking hadn't given a reply.

"He's asleep most likely," answered this most unveracious mate.
"Well, we'd better not disturb him, he's been very ill of late.
Let us leave him till the morning"—which they did, and then once more
An unsuspecting sailor went a-tapping at the door.



No answer! Goodness gracious! And the mate then strode inside.
"Why, blest if he is here at all!" the artful fellow cried:
"Those lubbers with their blessed writs have kept him off the ship:
So I am your commander, lads, for this 'ere little trip!"

Now, once more to the captain in his hiding-place let's go.
Well, he was just beginning to find matters rather slow;
And thinking that by now they'd passed all dangerous ports, no doubt,
He cautiously proceeded from the hold to clamber out.

Anon upon his well-loved deck he found himself once more,
And proceeded to the cabin he had left the day before,

But long before he got there he was very roughly seized
By a sailor who sneered grimly when he said he wasn't pleased.

And other sailors hurried up, and they were rough as well,
And when he said, "How dare you!" they responded with a yell.
"I'm your skipper!" he cried fiercely, but the sailors simply roared,
And then they asked him sternly how he'd got himself aboard.

"Fetch the mate!" he shouted wildly, but the mate the noise had heard
And hurried up unsummoned to demand what had occurred.
"Tell 'em, Jackson," cried the skipper, "tell 'em who I am, old man!"
But the mate responded haughtily, "I'm jiggered if I can!"

Then the captain shook and trembled, and he cursed his shaven chin,
And threatened all and sundry, but it only made them grin:
And the mate grew black as thunder and much anger did display,
And bade them put in irons the unlucky "stowaway."

Sitting in his lonely prison, this poor skipper had the time
To reflect upon the consequence that duly follows crime—
If he hadn't used those ladies so deceitfully on shore
The mate would not have had the chance to make *him* feel so sore!

Though still a trifle sullen, he grew quieter at last,
And agreed to work his passage as a hand before the mast;
And was finally deposited at some very distant port,
Where folks disbelieve his story, which they make him tell for sport.

To My Garden

Ode by a Suburban Amateur

MY Garden! What a word to soothe the sense!
Sorrow t' assuage, and ills to recompense!
My Garden! True, thou'rt but a tiny plot,
Yet how I pity him that none hath got!
A tiny plot! me b'seems it to confess
In area thou could'st not well be less—
Yet thou art *mine!* For *me* thy colours wave—
Or *should* at least, considering how I slave—
For *me* thy fragrance—tainted by the heap
Of rubbish that my neighbour e'er *will* keep
Anigh the severing pale! For me all this,
And heaven alone knows how much more of bliss!
My Garden! How I love thee! That *must* be,
Else could I not devote myself to thee
With purse and person, waging warfare still
With weed and insect multitudes that kill
Thy choicest products, ere they wax so high
As to be visible to the naked eye.
What moneys have I spent upon thy needs!
What packets countless have I bought of seeds—
What tins of "slugicide," what tons of mould!
Of every kind of fertilizer sold!

These have I lavished on thee—all for what?
Well, never mind! Upbraid thee *I* will not.

. . . . . .

My Garden! As I sit and gaze on thee,
I wonder how thou fascinatest me
Into expenditure I can ill afford,
Into exertions by my soul abhorred,
Into contempt for those who stand and sneer
And tell me that my flowers cost me dear—
Although I know mere reason would uphold
Those buy'ng for copper what I rear by gold!
Yea, Garden mine! At times my mind doth doubt,
For, be it said, thou dost so often flout
My best endeavour, and dost seldom keep
Thy promises that where I sow, I'll reap.
I've sown a lot, and reaped but little yet:
What wonder if disheartened I should get?
Not that I will though—think not so, I pray!
Nor shall another a word against thee say.

. . . . . .

But still—well—gaze upon thy beanless rods!
Yon row of peas, whose twenty bird-pecked pods
Have cost me each a shilling, and will shell
But half a "portion" at the most! Well, well!
They've done their best, and I have had rare fun
In looking for their advent one by one;
In "sticking" them, and welcoming the bloom
Whose earliest coming did dispel the gloom
My mind had fallen in, by long delay
And weary waiting for that joyous day.
Yes, let them scoff that have not known the joy
Of "own-grown" vegetables, ne'er to cloy
By surfeit! But to *me* each pod's a friend,
And to each bean I'm true until its end.

But what of the flowers, oh Garden, thou shouldst yield?
Something beyond the nettles of the field
I see on thee—and chickweed—these are not
The blossoms *I* crave for my little plot.
Where are my pansies? Where my stocks so fair?
My little asters later to shed there
Their varied radiance? Nay, 'tis hard indeed
That all of these should fall to insect greed!
Have I not laid green cabbage on the ground
Where every noisome slug should soon be found—
And so to his doom! Yet what is this I see—
My tender little plants all gone from me—
My pure nemophila—my dahlias young,
Unto whose autumn beauty I'd have sung—
All eaten up! 'Tis vexing to the soul
To see, or find, one's darlings swallowed whole.
Lime, you will say? I've tried it—burnt my plants—
Soot also, every cure that science grants;
But all in vain. I wage a constant war,
But those I fight grow stronger than before.
Where are the birds that off my foes should sup?
Better engaged in rooting seedlings up:
Nature has ceased her natural strifes, to bind
Her hostile forces 'gainst my peace of mind!

. . . . . .

But this is grumbling! Garden, please forgive—
Remembering always 'tis for thee I live;
For thy small favours I will grateful be
Nor raise a voice of discontent to thee.
My Garden! Let me see how I can praise—
No doubt there is some error in *my* ways:
Let me describe thee, so that those who read,
To sing thy beauties may be all agreed.

. . . . . .

What do I see? A square? An oblong, say,
An oaken fence around that shall, some day,
Hide 'neath nasturtium and climbing bean
Till of its native brownness nought be seen:
A path of gravel—nay, 'tis not my fault
If for the nonce it bear a load of salt—
'Tis salt or weeds! Of these choice *must* be made,
And salt looks best, and so the salt is laid.
A path of turf, from plantains not quite free,
And here and there it seemeth worn to be—
But still *'tis* turf: it is indeed! And then,
My well-loved flower-beds, two feet by ten,
One right, one left; a (blighted) rose on each—
Blight on the rose a lesson rare doth teach,
So must we suffer it, though with regret:
Besides, a bud *may* fight its way through yet!
The vegetables struggle in the rear
Right from the turf, to where there rises sheer
The back-fence that doth mark my farthest bound
And save me trespassing on another's ground.
A single tree its leafy shade doth spread,
Or *would* do, but I greatly fear 'tis dead—
Still its brown arms from which the green hath flown
Possess a picturesqueness all their own,
And he that is of fancy but possessed
May clothe them with the verdure he loves best.

. . . . . .

Ah, there's the point! 'Tis fancy makes to seem
My garden as of Paradise a dream!
Imagination, hope, on little fed—
These deck with bloom each cruelly raided bed;
Undo the ravages of cat or blight
And make the patch a picture of delight.

These *I* possess, and so, dear space, thou'lt find
That to thy barrenness I'm ever blind;
That in my eyes thy greens and browns are blent
With gold and blue and crimson, as 'twas meant!
I'll ne'er forget, e'en though thy crops grow less,
That fertile thou'rt in one thing—Happiness!

Damon and Pythias

FOR thirteen years in one abode,
A first floor in the Old Kent Road,
Damon and Pythias dwelt.
Damon was known as Thomas Mead,
For Pythias, Tim Nolan read—
A Saxon and a Celt.

Tim Pythias was thirty-one,
Tom Damon's years their course had run
To similar extent;
And since the time they'd quitted school,
Each in one office had a stool,
And o'er one ledger bent.

For both were clerks in Mincing Lane,
And ministered towards the gain
Of Messrs Spice and Co.;
Which gain was many thousands clear,
Whereof some eighty pounds a year
To Tom and Tim did go.

Each twelvemonth brought the trifling rise
Of five pound to their salaries,
Which certainly were small;
But Timothy and Thomas were
By nature a contented pair,
And murmured not at all.

They shared apartments, shared the rent,
They shared their meals, and sometimes went
Together to the pit;
And from one bottle oft while there
They'd quaff the festive ginger-beer,
Or else a lemon "split."

So fond, indeed, was Tom of Tim
(Who was no less attached to him)
That everybody said,
They'd got into a sort of groove
From which they never more would move
Till one of them was dead.

Now at the time whereof I write
It chanced that Thomas wasn't quite
At ease within his mind,
Yet was his trouble's nature such
That he would rather suffer much
Than Tim its cause should find.

But Tim himself, 'tis strange to say,
Was troubled in a similar way,
And also strove to hide
The facts from Tom, for whose advice,
In many another matter nice
He often had applied.

For several weeks together they
Grew daily more and more *distrait*
And less and less at ease;
Life wasn't what it was before—
E'en dominoes were found a bore
And cribbage failed to please.

Of course, if Tom or Tim alone
Had suffered, he'd have had to own
What 'twas upset him thus.
But each young man was so afraid
Of being by himself betrayed,
That neither made a fuss,

But let things jog along until
Their mutual friends all thought them ill,
They were so dull and *triste;*
Except "Good morning" and "Good night,"
They scarcely spoke; though still polite,
Their friendly banter ceased.

Now, though the youths were fain to hide
Their trouble, yet may I confide,
Kind listeners, in you?
And if you care to follow me
For a brief while, I hope to see
This little matter through.

Well, Tom and Tim, as I have said,
For thirteen years together led
A most contented life;
And though affectionate young men,
They'd neither of them thought till then
Of marrying a wife.

But still, there comes a time to all
When single blessedness will pall
Like ev'ry too sweet thing,
And as it chanced this period came
And burnt with simultaneous flame
The youths of whom I sing.

Yes ; both fell victims in one day,
And both in just the selfsame way
And by the selfsame means,
Which means were humble, even low,
But then romances often grow
In unromantic scenes.

One night their minds they had made up
In extra stylish way to sup
And settled on a dish
For which they both a weakness had—
A dish that none would think so bad—
Brown, succulent, fried fish.

When thus they'd fixed their bill of fare,
They sought the shop whose fragrance rare
So soothes the nasal sense,
And gave a liberal order for
The choicest "corners" in the store,
Regardless of expense.

Then with their purchase home they hied,
Where they beheld, with silent pride,
The supper cloth all laid
With knives and forks and cruetstand,
And bread, and plates, and teapot, and
A jar of marmalade.

"And now, old man, undo the fish,"
Said Tom, "and put it in the dish,
I'm ready to begin."
Tim cast aside the paper wrap,
And answered, "Right you are, old chap,
Don't mind me, please wire in."

They found those "corners" extra nice
And so "wired" in not once, nor twice,
How often, I'll not say ;
But when they'd finished, by-and-bye,
The paper-wrapper caught Tom's eye
Which Tim had cast away.

He smoothed it out and glanced it o'er
And then he smoothed it out once more,
His carefulness seemed strange ;
But when he cried out, "Here's a treat!"
Tim rushed to gaze upon the sheet—
The *Conjugal Exchange.*

'Twas full of strange announcements which
Came solely from the very rich
Or else the highly bred,
Who having either boundless wealth
Or brains, accomplishments, and health
Were fain at once to wed.

Both Timothy and Thomas chaffed
The advertisers, and they laughed
At what they called "their tricks" ;
Yet each the thought in secret struck
He might do worse than try his luck
With number two, nine, six.

For two, nine, six excelled the rest
Distinctly ; she was much the best
Of all the ladies who
By boldly advertising there
And setting forth their virtues rare
Invited men to woo.

According to herself, this girl
Was only daughter of an earl
And over middle height,
Her hair was gold, her eyes were blue,
She was affectionate and true,
Cheerful, sweet-tempered, bright.

She was as wise as any sage,
Accomplished, and but just of age,
Her income was her own;
And such an income too! Oh, dear,
I think for half as much a year
I'd marry any crone.

Now, all this nice young lady sought
Was, really, practically nought
Compared with what she gave:
The youth who wished to claim her hand
Must be "*domesticated*," and
She'd be his willing slave.

"What awful bosh!" said Mr Mead,
And Mr Nolan quite agreed,
And vowed 'twas all a sell.
What else they said I need not quote;
However, each took careful note
Of two, nine, six, as well.

And both of them that very night
Were at some trouble to indite
An answer to the fair,
In which they, to a large degree,
"Domesticated" claimed to be,
And true beyond compare.

Next morn each youth, on conquest bent,
His missive to the office sent—
'Twas somewhere in the Strand:
Each gave a different strange address,
A sample of the keen *finesse*
With which their schemes they planned.

The editor of the *Exchange*
Replied that he would soon arrange
With number two, nine, six.
A guinea was the needful fee,
And when that was received, why he
The matter straight would fix.

Thus answered he to either youth,
Who thought the fee but small, in truth
For such a splendid chance;
Altho' it made th' exchequer low
Each gaily sent his P.O.O.
His wooing to advance.

But this did not advance it much—
The editor then said that such
Was but the *opening* fee;
My good friends, you and I may laugh,
But for the fair one's photograph
He asked for guineas three!

Our friends, alas! drawn on by fate,
To pay thus did not hesitate,
Regardless of the fact
That Mrs Catts's bill was due—
But when you've been in love, p'raps you
Have also wisdom lacked.

Each thought the photograph sublime,
And gazed upon the face what time
The other was not near;
But each, while worshipping his prize,
Gave freely vent to mournful sighs
Watered with many a tear.

For now, though quite impoverished, they
To have an *interview* must pay
Another horrid fee—
And this time it was seven pounds!
These fees advanced by leaps and bounds,
To use a simile.

And thus we've come back to the time
Referred to earlier in my rhyme,
So now, then, if you please,
You know the secret cause, why they
Grew daily more and more *distrait*,
And less and less at ease.

'Twas inability to see
Their way to raise the last named fee
That killed their peace of mind;
'Twas hard when such a chance they'd found
To fail for want of seven pound,
No wonder that they pined.

They asked their salaries in advance
But Messrs Spice looked quite askance
At such a bold request;
The senior spoke in tones severe;
In all his mercantile career
He'd ne'er been so distressed.

I must not o'er prolong my tale;
They tried all methods, but to fail;
At length, quite desperate grown,
Tom brought himself to speak to Tim
(Who'd just resolved to speak to him)
His sorry plight to own.

"Old man," cried he, when Tom had told,
"You've been indeed most nicely sold,
For I've a letter here
From two, nine, six, in which she vows
That I alone shall be her spouse—
You've lost your coin, I fear."

"And so have you," cried Tom, "for see
Here is a letter sent to me,
'Tis word for word the same:
We've both been playing in the dark."
Tim sighed and uttered this remark:
"We both have lost the game."

Next day they wrote the editor
To send them back their money, or
They would expose his tricks:
That worthy man no notice took
But set himself more fools to hook
With number two, nine, six.

And Tim and Tom resumed the ways
Of former, likewise happier, days,
As bachelors to try
Love's misadventures to forget—
So now we'll leave them with regret
And mutual

GOOD-BYE!

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[*For Press Notices see next page*

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